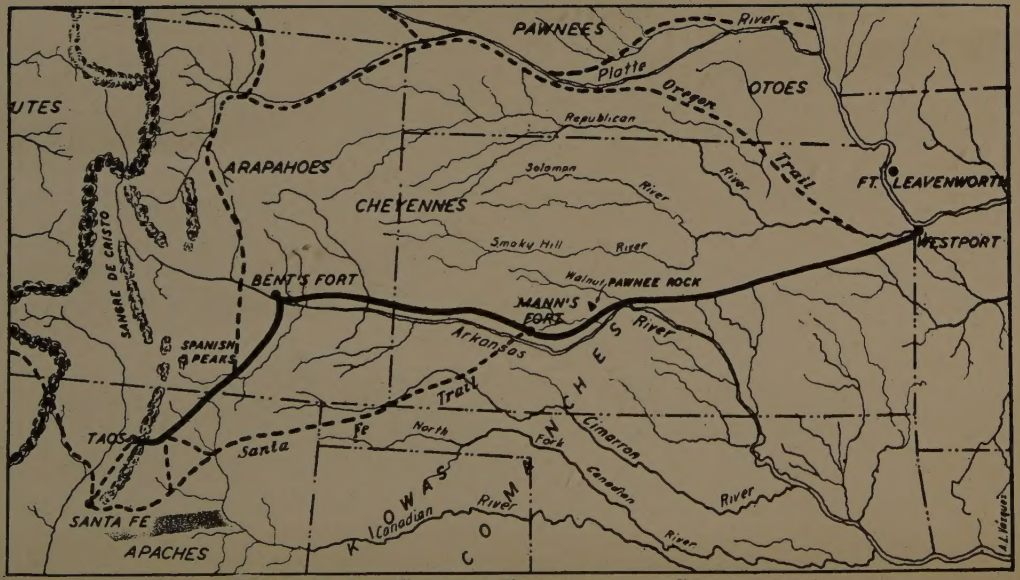
The Western Series of English and American Classics

Wah-To-Yah and The Taos Trail

Lewis H. Garrard

State Department
of Education
Santa Fe, N. M.



MAP OF THE COUNTRY TRAVERSED BY GARRARD

Garrard's route is indicated by the heavy black line; other important trails are marked.

THE WESTERN SERIES OF ENGLISH AND AMERICAN CLASSICS

Wah-To-Yah
and
The Taos Trail

BY

LEWIS H. GARRARD

EDITED FOR SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

BY

WALTER S. CAMPBELL, M. A. (OXON.)
(STANLEY VESTAL)
Assistant Professor of English
University of Oklahoma

HARLOW PUBLISHING CO.
Oklahoma City
1927

Copyright, 1927, By
HARLOW PUBLISHING CO.

First Printing, August, 1927.
Second Printing, September, 1927.
Third Printing, September, 1928.
Fourth Printing, March, 1930.

FOREWORD

Of all the volumes of early Western travels, none has less deserved neglect than Garrard's *Wah-To'-Yah, and the Taos Trail.* Yet no edition has appeared since the first (1850), and copies of the book are now very rare.

That such a book should be out of print is nothing short of a misfortune to all who care for the history of the Old Southwest, or who enjoy a lively, true account of travel and varied adventure in the years of the nation's most rapid expansion.

The author—a mere lad—precocious, well-read, and imaginative, has left a book without an equal in its field for variety of interest, for freshness and spontaneity of style, and for literal truth to fact. He takes us with him along the Santa Fe Trail, on the buffalo hunt, under the somber bastions of Bent's Old Fort, into Cheyenne tepees and New Mexican *ranchos,* and into picturesque Taos in the most exciting year of its long history. On his way home he serves for a time as a volunteer on dangerous duty, guarding the line of communications of the Army of the West in the Mexican War, and later engages in a battle with Comanche Indians. During his year in the West he meets many leading men, and portrays the trappers, traders, soldiers, Mexicans, and Indians to the life.

Parkman's *Oregon Trail,* which narrates its author's experiences on the northern plains in 1846, has long enjoyed an unmerited monopoly of interest in this field. Garrard's book, which covers the same year in the South and West, admirably supplements the account of the more famous historian. We believe that any unprejudiced reader will agree

that, of the two, Garrard's volume is the more interesting, varied, engaging; and it is no less convincing.

It is therefore with real satisfaction that the editor offers a new and freshly annotated edition. Garrard scatters historical, personal, and geographical allusions with a lavish hand; but these have been explained in the notes. Here and there, it has been thought best to modernize spelling, punctuation, etc. Occasionally, no such changes have been made, as the jottings from the author's notebook made such a course impracticable. Three brief passages from Chapters VI, XVIII, and XIX have been omitted. A few chapter headings have been rendered more explicit by additional words. Several of the author's notes have been inserted in the text, and others have been omitted or expanded. Otherwise, the text follows that of the first edition.

I am indebted to the State Historical Museum at Santa Fe, New Mexico, the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of American Ethnology, and the Field Museum, Chicago, for pictures. All who write of Bent's Old Fort or the Cheyenne Indians must inevitably owe much to the many excellent volumes and papers of Mr. George Bird Grinnell. The editor also is glad that his own boyhood was spent in close contact with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, and that he knew personally many of the descendants of the people mentioned in this book. Finally, thanks must be expressed for much information gained from George Bent (son of William Bent) in the years before his recent death.

W. S. CAMPBELL, M. A. (Oxon.)
The University of Oklahoma.
May, 1927.

CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
	To the Reader	i
	The Author's Introduction	v
I.	The Start	1
II.	The Santa Fe Trail	27
III.	The Cheyenne Village	44
IV.	Peculiarities	57
V.	Old Fort Bent	70
VI.	The Scalp Dance	85
VII.	Strangers and Drawbacks	91
VIII.	The Snow Tramp	101
IX.	Prospective Trouble	115
X.	El Rio de las Animas	125
XI.	El Rio Vermejo	142
XII.	El Rancho	154
XIII.	El Valle de Taos	166
XIV.	El Consejo	175
XVI.	Los Pueblos	189
XVI.	Los Pueblos	189
XVII.	El Muerte	198
XVIII.	Adios	209
XIX.	Wah-To-Yah	212
XX.	The Farm	236
XXI.	The Arkansas	251
XXII.	Service at Mann's Fort	263
XXIII.	A Welcome Arrival	272
XXIV.	The Brush With Comanches	291
XXV.	Farewell	303
	Appendix (Suggestions for Study)	309
	Glossary	317

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Map ..... Frontispiece
Medicine Lodge 26
Bent's Old Fort 43
Cheyenne Warriors 84
Pueblo of Taos 188
Plan of Storming of Pueblo de Taos 197

TO THE READER

This book has to do with the most interesting year (1846-1847) in the history of the Old Southwest—that great region embracing parts of Kansas, Colorado, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. It presents a true, vivid, and amusing picture of the life of the frontiersmen, soldiers, Indians, and Mexicans of that time, and touches on almost every phase of existence on the plains, in the mountains, and in the Spanish settlements.

The author, Lewis H. Garrard, was born in 1829, apparently in Cincinnati, Ohio. His family were of Scotch-Irish Presbyterian stock, and came to Pennsylvania from County Antrim, Ireland, and founded the town of Chambersburg in that state. The family (Chambers) was active in the French and Indian wars and in the Revolution, two of Garrard's ancestors serving as colonels in both wars. A true American, Garrard loved adventure, and when only seventeen years old, persuaded his parents to allow him to spend a year in the Far West. Accordingly, he left St. Louis, Missouri, in September, 1846, and travelled across the buffalo plains with a train of covered wagons. On his return he cast his notes into a connected narrative, and this book is the result.

Lewis was a lively, frank, courageous, and observant young man. He saw most things worth seeing, wherever he was; and he had an uncanny trick of being on hand whenever anything interesting was going on. He hunted buffalo, danced and traded with the Indians, rounded up cattle with the New Mexican *rancheros*, assisted in quelling the revolt of the Pueblos at Taos, served as a volunteer in the Mexican war, fought Comanches, and made friends every-

where with red men and white. Very few young men can have crammed so much interest and excitement into one year as he did, and he has written it down for us with all the enthusiasm, frankness, and keen observation of youth.

The book is packed with information presented in the most entertaining manner. The style is easy, informal, and natural, yet always clear. The result is a volume which has all the merits of good talk combined with any amount of valuable information —a very unusual kind of book, without a single dull page.

The full title of the original edition reads as follows: *"Wah-To'-Yah, and the Taos Trail*; or *Prairie Travel and Scalp Dances, with a look at Los Rancheros from Muleback and the Rocky Mountain Campfire,* by Lewis H. Garrard. Published by H. W. Derby & Co., Cincinnati, 1850." This old-fashioned title reads like a table of contents, and from it the reader will get some idea of what the book contains.

After Garrard returned to St. Louis in 1847, we lose sight of him. All that we know of him is that he lived for some years after, long enough to publish two other slender volumes, as follows:

(1) *Chambersburg in the Colony and the Revolution, a sketch* by Lewis H. Garrard, Member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and of the Historical and Philosophical Society of Ohio . . . Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott & Co, 1856. (60 pages.)

This was intended as a preface or preliminary account of the family to be prefixed to the memoir of his grandmother. It deals with the exploits of the earlier Chambers, and the founding of Chambersburg.

(2) *Memoir of Charlotte Chambers* by her grand-

son, Lewis H. Garrard, Philadelphia; printed for the author, 1856. (195 pages.)

The first sixty pages of the Memoir are identical with the sketch listed just above. To these are added a long series of letters by the good lady, his grandmother, and short passages of narrative recounting her many virtues and incidents of her life and last hours. It is intended as a glorification of the Revolutionary pioneer woman.

Neither of these slender volumes shows much originality, and both are full of examples of false rhetoric and careless sentence structure. Both consist largely of documents and letters. The second was undertaken at the request of the author's mother. Few people will care to read about it.

But with *Wah-To'-Yah and the Taos Trail,* it is another matter. Here, for once in his life, our author found a subject and a style that exactly suited one another. His heart was in his story, and the result is a rare book, rare both in spirit and matter. This book, written by one so young, should be an incentive to all who read it.

The Author's Introduction

In offering this little volume to the public, I must, in self-justice, be briefly introduced, so that the obliging peruser, with all the facts before him, may extend a benevolent forbearance, and restrain too severe a criticism of this, my first essay.

In February, 1846, being then in my seventeenth year, I tossed away schoolbooks and glided down the Mississippi River and along the Mexican Gulf to Texas, and shortly after, back to the Louisiana coast, where I stayed until the middle of May, visiting friends, riding horses, and shooting alligators, duck, and rail from the bow of a long canoe in the cypress swamps.

Returning home, the glowing pages of Fremont's tour to the Rocky Mountains in 1842-43,[1] were so alluring to my fancy that my parents were persuaded to let me go westward; and they, furnishing letters of credit, cash, a pocket Bible, and rifle, with a few calico shirts, started me to St. Louis on a low-water steamer in the hot month of July. The miseries of running "hard aground" on sandbars in the sweltering sun, a surfeit of sleep and "James's last," with an occasional peep at the leaves of my testament, were the most striking incidents until reaching the narrow St. Louis wharf—where, amid the din of importunate hotel attachés, I passed my baggage into safe hands, and threading the busy throng, entered my name on the books of the Planters' House.

[1] *The Fremont Report*—in Senate Documents, Vol. XI, of 2d Session, Twenty-first Congress; also in House Reports, and published as a separate bulletin for public distribution.

Through the kindness of Colonel A. B. Chambers,[1] of the Missouri Republican, I was made acquainted with the firm of Piérre Choteau, Jr. Co.,[2] to whose numerous forts in the Indian Territory I was given a letter of recommendation. Mr. Kenneth McKenzie.[3] one of the first traders with the Blackfeet Indians. treated me and my many queries with even more lenity than I could reasonably expect. Mr. St. Vrain, of the firm of Bent, St. Vrain & Co., Indian and Mexican traders, was at the Planters', and soon to start for the Rocky Mountains and Santa Fe; on his kindly consenting to accept me in his mess, Colonel Chambers furnished additional letters.

My elder brothers wished me to note the occurring events, for their gratification. It was done, though in a desultory style. Abominable chills and fever greeted my return to civilization, and it was through the intervals of study that the scanty pencillings have thus been augmented—and not until the greater portion was written, had I the hardihood to think of publishing. Then, the request of friends, coupled

---

[1]*A. B. Chambers*—Probably a relative of the author's, since he was descended from the Chambers who founded Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. Garrard's grandmother removed to Missouri long before this.

[2]*The Choteaus* of St. Louis were associated with the Astors of New York to form the American Fur Company, which came to dominate the business. The name is found widely distributed on western maps. (For example, Choteau, Oklahoma.) Pierre Choteau, Jr. was the first to navigate the Missouri River above Council Bluffs. Pierre, capital of South Dakota, takes its name from a post named for him.

[3]*Kenneth McKenzie*—Ablest trader of the American Fur Company. Built Fort Union on the Missouri, and many other posts. Born, Scotland 1801; died, St. Louis, 1861. A man of unusual breeding, capacity, and wealth.

with the bidding of a pardonable vanity, produced them in the present form.

I have thought proper so to entitle the work, as my wanderings were in sight of the Spanish Peaks, and along the Taos Trail. The accent, in pronouncing Wah-to-yah, is on the second syllable.[1] Taos is pronounced Touse, as in house—the Spanish Mexican accent, however, being prolonged on the word, Taouse.

Should any account be deemed either meagre or fulsome, I cheerfully apologize with the single remonstrance—it has the merit of truthfulness. Imagination plays but a very minor part; and in no instance so as to give an improper conception of scene, time, or manner. An accusation of grossness may be raised, and that the characters use seemingly uncalled-for expressions. I have set down naught in malice, and it is no more my prerogative to exclude than to add.—L. H. G.

---

[1]*Wah-to-yah*—The Ute Indian name, meaning Twins, given to *Las Cumbres Espanolas*, the Spanish Peaks, in Southeastern Colorado.

WAH-TO-YAH
AND
THE TAOS TRAIL

To Mr. St. Vrain—

The leader of our party—the traverser of the plains—the revered of the Cheyenne Nation—this book is respectfully inscribed, by one who holds in grateful remembrance his many kind services.

Wah-To-Yah
And
The Taos Trail

CHAPTER I
The Start

Having made all necessary preparations, such as laying in a good store of caps, fine glazed powder, etc.; and having seen the shot towers, French Town, public and private buildings; at the instance of Mr. St. Vrain, our worthy *chef du voyage,*[1] I crammed my purchases, clothes, etc., into my trunk, put it in charge of the porter and walked to the steamer Saluda, bound for Kansas,[2] on the Missouri River, with many kind wishes uttered in my behalf. Then, after the third tolling of the bell, and in obedience to the signals of the pilot, we were stemming the uninviting, yellow Mississippi.

I knew no one, and was left to range of thought and a poor "Havana" without interruption; but amid the talk of fellow passengers, who, in armchairs and with feet on the boat railing, were twisting their necks to gaze at a very common-looking man in a check-linen coat and trousers. I learned that their center of attraction was Mr. Edwards, the Governor *regnant* of Missouri. On scrutiny, the countenance of Mr. Edwards indicated considerable shrewdness; but, altogether, he fell below my ideas of a governor.

At the mouth of the Missouri River, the mingling of the waters was no less novel than curious. A volume of water, from the muddy and rapid Missouri, sent by the force of the undercurrent far out in the transparent Mississippi, would boil up to the surface, contrasting oddly enough.

[1]French—Leader of the expedition.

[2]*Kansas*—The town, not the present State. At this time, there was no Territory of Kansas.

We had a pleasant trip to Kansas, but the turbid stream and mud bluff banks destroy the pleasing effects generally attendant on northern rivers. Colonel Chick, the principal man at Kansas, treated me kindly during my stay, and with his clever sons, the horse ferry, skiffs, and duck shooting, afforded entertainment.

To my surprise, Mr. T. B. Drinker, formerly an editor of a paper in Cincinnati, advanced toward me, after looking at the name on my trunk, and introduced himself. We were together much of the time while waiting for Mr. St. Vrain and company, with whom we expected to traverse the prairie as far as Bent's Fort,[1] to arrive from St. Louis.

The Wyandotte[2] is the nearest Indian tribe to Kansas; and one afternoon Mr. Drinker and myself visited the agent, Doctor Hewitt. A walk of a mile through woods on the river bank brought us to the mouth of the Kansas, or Kaw River, a stream ferried by a tall, good specimen of a full-blood Wyandotte, who received the toll with a look, as if to say, "Your money's no account, and I've a mind to toss you in the river for offering it." Our attempts at conversation failed.

Mr. Walker, with whom we had previously become acquainted, is one of the first men of the tribe, once editor of the *Wyandotte Advocate*. Mr. Armstrong

---

[1]*Bent's Old Fort*, or Fort William. Headquarters of the firm of Bent, St. Vrain, and Company, Indian and Mexican Traders, located on the Old Santa Fe Trail, (mountain branch) on the north bank of the Arkansas River, eleven miles west of the present town of Las Animas, Colorado. Bent's Fort was the most important establishment between the Missouri River and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

[2]*Wyandotte*—A people of Iroquoian stock, first found in Ontario, and removed to Kansas in 1842. Since 1867 in Oklahoma.

is also an intelligent gentleman. He has a white wife, a good farm, and (the year I saw him) was to receive ten thousand dollars improvement money for his farm in Ohio, which state he, with the rest of the nation, was forced to vacate three years previous.

Returning from our visit, Mr. Drinker walked on out of sight, while I shot repeatedly and ineffectually at a woodpecker. On the third discharge of my rifle, a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder, accompanied by a firm grip. I jumped around to confront a drunken Indian, whose face was red with paint and blood. Holding in his free hand a broken bottle, he said, "You bad; you shoot; you scare me," and he tightened his grasp on my collar.

"No, I didn't, sir—I didn't mean to scare you, sir," replied I in a tremulous voice. But seeing that that would not do, I changed tack and edged in, "Don't you want a 'bit' to buy liquor?" And, as he held out his hand, I left in a hurry.

Drinker and I, hiring horses, rode through the town of Westport,[1] and galloped over the undulating prairie, studded with plum bushes and small oak. Emerging into the bare plain, we saw a group of men busied in loading a wagon, of which there were some twenty or more, drawn up in the form of a pen. Mr. Bransford,[2] the gentleman in charge, received my letters with the prairie welcome of, "Won't you make camp?"

We were invited to stay until Mr. St. Vrain would arrive; and in two days our trunks were there. Every morning we rode to Westport, and saw the differ-

---

[1]*Westport*—The starting point of caravans bound west. Located south of the junction of the Kansas River with the Missouri River, in Missouri.

[2]*Bransford*—A clerk in the employ of Bent, St. Vrain, & Company.

ent Indians, in fanciful dresses, riding in on their handsome ponies to trade and look around. Some of the squaws were possessed of good features, though gross forms; both men and women were debased by liquor. The laws are not stringent enough on this point. The unsophisticated Indian, too much exposed to the seductive language of the unprincipled trader in liquor, soon barters away all his valuables and annuity money.

Heretofore we had been sleeping under a tent made of wagon sheets, but the freight had arrived at Kansas, the sheets were taken from us, and the wagons sent to be loaded. From that time we reposed in the open air, which, at first, was refreshing, invigorating, life-inspiring. I used to lie admiring the bright stars until overpowered by sleep.

There were eighteen or twenty Canadian Frenchmen (principally from St. Louis), composing part of our company, as drivers of the teams. As I have ever been a lover of sweet, simple music, their beautiful and piquant songs, in the original language, fell most harmoniously on the ear, as we lay wrapped in our blankets.

On the first of September, Mr. St. Vrain's arrival infused some life into our proceedings, but nothing more worthy of note occurred, except riding and looking at horses, of which Drinker and I were in need. Frank De Lisle, *le maitre de wagon*[1] sold me for fifty dollars a horse which, from his fanciful color, brown and white spots, and white eyes, was designated by the descriptive, though not euphonious name, of Paint. He was a noted buffalo chaser, and I anticipated much excitement through his services.

The way the mules were broken to wagon harness

---

[1]Wagon-master, the man in charge of the caravan.

would have astonished the "full-blooded" animals of Kentucky and other horse-raising states exceedingly. It is a treatment none but hardy Mexican or scrub mules could survive. They first had to be lassoed by our expert Mexican, Blas, their heads drawn up to a wagon wheel, with scarce two inches of spare rope to relax the tight noose on their necks, and starved for twenty-four hours to subdue their fiery tempers; then harnessed to a heavy wagon, lashed unmercifully when they did not pull, whipped still harder when they ran into still faster speed, until, after an hour's bewilderment, and plunging, and kicking, they become tractable and broken-down—a labor-saving operation, with the unflinching motto of "kill or cure."

In the afternoon of the twelfth of September, 1846, the train rolled out—the heavily laden, high-before-and-behind Pennsylvania wains careening from side to side in the ruts, the shouts of the drivers to the newly-yoked teams, and the *va'ya, hu'a, cara'ho,*[1] of Blas and his two Mexican herders, and the *caballada,*[2] imparted a freshness and added vigor to our movements; horsemen going to and fro for things forgotten or missing, Mr. St. Vrain and De Lisle, passing and repassing from one end of the train to examine the strength and capabilities of the weaker wagons; and ourselves, with new companions, talking and chirruping to our horses, slowly bringing up the rear, gave an appearance of efficiency and progress. Amid the bustle, the foremost teams and ourselves reached the "Delaware Spring" after dark,

---

[1]Spanish ejaculations, "get up," "get along," etc.

[2]*Caballada*—Spanish term for herd of spare animals. Usually driven at the rear of the caravan. Sometimes called *cavayard, cavvy.*

and the whips and shouts applied to the sluggish oxen of the lagging teams did not cease until far in the night. Our horses were turned out to graze, the blankets unstrapped from the saddles, and we lay down supperless.

This was a most desirable spot for camping, as wood, grass, and a running, limpid stream were close at hand. It is generally the first day's drive. On the sixteenth we encamped at the "Lone Elm" (Round Grove) in the midst of a hard rain which poured on us the entire day; and the wagons being full of goods, and we without tents, a cheerless, chilling, soaking wet night was the consequence. As the water penetrated, successively, my blankets, coat, and shirt, and made its way down my back, a cold shudder came over me; in the gray foggy morning a more pitiable set of hungry, shaking wretches was never seen. Oh, but it was hard on the poor greenhorns!

On the eighteenth (we still at the "Lone Elm"), a Shawnee Indian rode into camp from out of the high bottom grass to the south, informing us that another Indian had three oxen marked with the company's brand "(—B" (quarter circle—B), upon which intelligence, Messrs. St. Vrain and Bransford started in pursuit, returning with fifteen yoke. On the nineteenth, the train was started along the heavy road; dense fogs dampened our clothing and spirits, and but for brandy and other liquors, fever and ague would have predominated. As it was, Blas and Piérre shook, for which cholagogue, quinine and pills were administered by the "doctor," as I was styled. Beauvais and I made quite a detour through the prairie, during which we saw two deer, several prairie chickens, and obtained fine views of the adjacent country. That night we encamped on

Bull Creek[1] and on the twenty-ninth, at a most delightfully gushing fountain, Big John Spring,[2] flowing from the hillside. All stopped and drank.

As we are all collected, it would be well to state the size and intention of the company. It was commanded by St. Vrain,[3] an old mountaineer of the firm of Bent, St. Vrain & Co., Indian and Mexican traders. The firm is rich, and owner of several forts, of which Bent's, or Fort William, on the Arkansas, is the principal. Mr. St. Vrain is a gentleman in the true sense of the term, his French descent imparting an exquisite, indefinable degree of politeness, which, combined with the frankness of an ingenuous mountain man, made an amiable fellow traveler. His kindness and respect toward me I shall always gratefully remember. Mr. Folger, another of our company, was a gentleman so wedded to a roving life on the prairie that he has accompanied Mr. St. Vrain for several years, in pure love of adventure. His mule, "David," was a comical, antiquated animal; the study of the expression of his grizzled phiz was truly laughable; and much merriment was caused by the master's sensible and affectionate advice and consolation to David.

Mr. Beauvais was a Frenchman, employed to trade

---

[1]*Bull Creek*—Twenty-two miles from Westport, a regular camping place on the Santa Fe Trail (Marcy).

[2]*Big John Spring*—One hundred thirty-eight miles from Westport, just seven miles east of Council Grove (Gregg). Nine miles per day!

[3]*Ceran St. Vrain*, of aristocratic French-Flemish blood, born in St. Louis before 1818, partner to the Bents 1824-1850. Later he was active in politics in the Southwest, during the Civil War for the Union, and in business. He married a daughter of Judge Beaubien, living in Taos. He died at Mora, New Mexico, 1870. Tourists in Colorado northwest of Denver are familiar with his name as given to a mountain pass, stream, and glacier.

with the Sioux[1] Indians; Frank De Lisle, a clever fellow, the wagon master, or director—an officer of trust; Bransford was clerk to the company; and General Lee, of St. Louis, Narcisse Beaubien, of New Mexico, and Drinker and myself, of Cincinnati, constituted our mess. There were, besides, twenty-three teamsters, and the same number of wagons; every man armed, equipped and ready (if it were forced upon us) for a fight with the "yellow skins."

On the thirtieth of September, we arrived at Council Grove—considered the best camping place on the road. On the west skirt of the belt of timber, under the wide-spreading protection of a huge oak, was a diminutive blacksmith shop, sustained by the government for the purpose of repairing wagons en route to the army at Santa Fe.

We remained for two days at the "Grove," to recruit the oxen after the heavy pulling from Westport, and as this is the last place (travelling westward) where hard timber can be procured, the men were busy felling hickories and oaks for spare axletrees, and swinging the rough-hewn pieces under their wagons. I took my rifle in search of a flock of turkeys, whose tantalizing piping was easily heard from camp. In the evening, Beauvais and I washed our shirts—my first essay—in the clear brook; succeeding tolerably, only.

What a pleasing appearance have the dark-green fringes of timber, standing far out in the prairie, lit up and variegated by the early tints of fall! I have been extremely delighted, since setting out,

---

[1]*Sioux*—Dakota (Teton division.) At this time north of the Platte River in Wyoming and South Dakota. See Parkman's *The Oregon Trail.*

with the lovely scenery—a too-vivid picture of which cannot be portrayed.

On leaving Council Grove, the verdure and scenery change; the grass is much shorter, partaking of none of the luxuriant growth of the herbage a few days back; wooded creeks become scarce, and timbered principally with sweet cottonwood.

The maneuvers of the Mexicans of our company are really astonishing in lassoing unruly mules and horses; dodge as they may, or run about, the lariat noose is sure to fall on their unwilling necks. A loop thrown over the nose, the gagging Spanish bit forced into the mouth, the saddle clapped on, and the rider firmly in that with galling spurs tickles the side ribs, and flies and curvets on the plain in less time than it can be written. But it does confound an animal to have a Mexican horse furniture and rider strapped on to him!

Mr. St. Vrain started in advance of the train, with three or four persons, for Bent's Fort, but meeting with a return government train, who reported the Indians troublesome, he waited for us to come up, preferring slow travel, and a large company, to a small party and uncertain possession of his scalp. Toward eleven o'clock in the morning we arrived at Cottonwood Fork[1]—a small stream, so called from the number of cottonwoods growing on its banks. One of the wagons overturned while crossing, breaking two boxes of claret. Those around had a treat most unexpected. A government train crossed soon after; and at sundown, Captain Thompson, U. S. Dragoons, and Lieutenant Colonel of the Mormon

[1]*Cottonwood Creek*—One hundred eighty-seven miles from Westport.

Battalion,[1] arrived with three light wagons and an escort of ten dragoons. He gave us the latest news.

In the morning he was off early in a gallop. His wagons with clean tightly drawn sheets and four fast mules attached showed well, coursing up the hill at a rapid rate.

We could not leave camp that day. De Lisle was under a wagon containing forty-five hundredweight of freight making some repairs, one wheel being off and propped up by a board, when the support gave way and the wagon fell confining him to the earth. His cries drew the men together and while the wagon was lifted off him he was drawn from under almost dead. He was so far recovered that the next day we travelled.

So soon as a faint streak of light appears in the east the cry "turn out" is given by De Lisle. All rise and in half an hour the oxen are yoked, hitched, and started. For the purpose of bringing everything within a small compass, the wagons are corralled—that is, arranged in the form of a pen, when camp is made. And as no animals in that country are caught without a lasso, they are much more easily noosed if driven in the corral. There, no dependence must be placed upon anyone but one's self; and the sooner one rises when the cry is given, the easier one can get one's horse.

Like all persons on the first trip, I was green in the use of the lasso, and Paint was given to all sorts of malicious dodging; perhaps I have not worked myself into a profuse perspiration with vexation a

[1]*Mormon Battalion*—Organization of 500 volunteers formed on invitation of General Kearny from the Mormon colony at Council Bluffs, for service in the Mexican War, June 1846.

hundred and one times, in vain attempts to trap him!

Not being able to catch my horse this morning, I hung my saddle on a wagon and walked, talking to the loquacious Canadians, whose songs and stories were most acceptable. They are a queer mixture anyhow, these French Canadians; rain or shine, hungry or satisfied, they are the same garrulous, careless fellows; generally carolling in honor of some brunette *Vide Poche*[1] or St. Louis Creole beauty, or lauding, in the words of their ancestry, the soft skies and grateful wine of La Belle France; occasionally uttering a *sacre* or *enfant de garce*,[2] but suffering no cloud of ill humor to overshadow them but for a moment. While walking with a languid step, cheering up their slow oxen, a song would burst out from one end of the train to the other, producing a most charming effect.

On the sixth of October we met a government train from Santa Fe, which reported buffalo in plenty ten miles ahead; and about four o'clock in the afternoon, Edmond Paul, near whom I was walking, shouted *"Bison!"* pointing with his whip to the westward, where were several running, and soon disappearing in the mirage which transformed them into huge, shapeless masses.

The first time I ever witnessed the mirage was in Texas. The friend, with whom I was riding, pointed toward the illusion, with the remark, "What a beautiful lake!" And it was not until we found it to be receding at our approach that we were undeceived.

We encamped on a slope, using *bois de vache* (buffalo chips) for want of better fuel. We, on horses,

---

[1]*Vide Poche*—Empty Pocket, a humorous nickname given to Carondelet, the French suburb of St. Louis, Mo.

[2]*Sacre'*, etc.—French ejaculation. See Glossary.

selected the camp before the wagons came up. Mr. St. Vrain and I, Folger and Chadwick, and Drinker and Bransford, each pair taking an *apishamore* (saddle blanket), would collect our blankets full of the fuel (for the "wood" lies in all directions), bring it up to the intended fire, and off again, until a pile several feet high had been collected. It burns well and freely, catching the steel-sparks like tinder; but, being light, is soon fanned into a hot coal, and turns immediately to ashes. Wind prevails to such an extent on the prairie, that no ashes are ever seen about a camp a day or two after the fire is made. Nothing but black spots on the ground mark the site.

Mr. St. Vrain and companions brought in the choice parts of a buffalo and every person was busied in cooking on his "own hook," and swallowing the tender meat. For the first night or two after entering the buffalo region, we were serenaded by the coyote wolf, a species of music much like a commingled bark, whine, yelp, and occasionally a spasmodic laugh, now tenor, now basso; then one would take a treble solo, and after an ear-piercing prelude, all would join in chorus, making an indescribable discord.

In the morning the train started as usual. Mr. St. Vrain, Drinker, Bransford, Folger and I left the trail for a buffalo hunt, intending to make a large circuit before meeting the wagons. I had a shot at a large white wolf—the first we had seen. He was loping around camp when my shrill whistle brought him to a standstill. At the sharp crack of my rifle, the keen-faced stranger took to the plain. The presence of white wolves indicates the vicinity of buffalo.

All were on the *qui vive,* alert for the new game, and Mr. St. Vrain, who was in the lead, motioned with his hand for us to lean forward on our horses,

so as to keep the buffalo from seeing us. In a little while we dismounted in a hollow, and all but Bransford and I, who were left in charge of the horses, "approached" a band of bulls. At the report of the guns we led the animals towards them. "No meat," was the answer to our queries. The whole country was cut up with innumerable buffalo paths, intersecting one another at all possible angles.

Mr. St. Vrain on my horse, and Drinker on his own, started in pursuit of a band, and their movements were most exciting. Being without a horse, I waited on the prairie, looking at the flying buffalo, ten or twelve of which came tearing toward me as I lay in the grass. But they looked so frightful when within thirty yards, I jumped up and fired, without any perceptible effect, as they slightly turned and lumbered on.

We never eat but twice a day, very often but once in twenty-four hours, at which scarcity of food, of course, there was grumbling. Bransford, who disliked it very much, said, after having concealed his feelings some length of time, "Darn this way of living, anyhow; a feller starves a whole day like a mean coyote, and when he does eat, he stuffs himself like a snake that's swallowed a frog, and is no account for an hour after." It was about the truth, for our ravenous appetites scarcely knew bounds.

More buffalo in sight the third day than heretofore —the plain literally covered. We crossed Big Cow Creek, but no cows were seen,[1] and thinking best to secure meat, such as it was, while an opportunity presented, our worthy leader approached a band of

[1]At this date, owing to the vast slaughter of buffalo cows, the bulls were estimated to outnumber the cows ten to one. The meat and hides of bulls were too tough for ordinary use.

bulls and fired, bringing down one. It is with difficulty that buffalo can be approached, it requiring a skillful person who will not permit the keen-scented animal to get his leeward, or in sight; for they run when a person is in view as far as a mile, and from the scent still further. So we waited, with suppressed breathing, for the report of the rifle.

There lay a fine, fat, young male—ere long he was on his back, and the hide was off. The men ate the liver raw, with a slight dash of gall by way of zest. This, served *a la Indian*, was not very tempting to cloyed appetites. But to hungry men, not at all squeamish, raw, warm liver, with raw marrow, was quite palatable. Before the buffalo range was half traversed, I liked the novel dish pretty well.

It would not do for small hunting parties to build fires to cook with; for in this hostile Indian country, a smoke would bring inquiring friends! Speaking of hostile Indians reminds me of a question related by one of our men: at a party in a Missouri frontier settlement, a lady asked a mountaineer, fresh from the Platte if "*hos*tile Indians are as savage as those who serve on foot!"

Returning to camp, the prairie was black with the herds; and, a good chance presenting itself, I struck spurs into Paint, directing him toward fourteen or fifteen of the nearest—distant, eight or nine hundred yards. Paint and I soon neared them, giving me a flying view of their unwieldy proportions, and when within fifteen feet of the nearest I raised my rifle half-way to the face and fired. Reloading, still in hot pursuit (tough work to load on a full run), I followed, though without catching up. One feels a delightfully wild sensation when in pursuit of a band of buffalo on a fleet horse, with a good rifle,

and without a hat—the winds playing around the flushed brow, when with hair streaming, the rider nears the frightened herd, and, with a shout of exultation, discharges his rifle.

I returned to the party highly gratified with my first, though unsuccessful, chase; but Mr. St. Vrain put a slight damper to my ardor, by simply remarking, "The next time you run meat, don't let the horse go in a trot and yourself in a gallop." (I had, in my eagerness, leaned forward in the saddle, and a stumble of the horse would have pitched me over his head.) By this well-timed and laconic advice I afterward profited.

We encamped on Cow Creek,[1] the buffalo all round us in every direction, now lost in the mirage, now appearing, some herds wending slowly to an over-flowing slue near the camp, and others (the males), who, strutting in all the pomp of conscious dignity and supremacy until a whiff of wind was wafted to them, would lift their tails on high, scud before the wind, up and down, like a ship in short seas. Two staid old fellows came to the pond: after half an hour's crawling on our knees (Chadwick, Tibeau, and I), drawing our guns after us; then, when the buffaloes' backs were turned, running a few steps, then stopping and crawling again, all the time closely watching the sagacious animals, which would stop short every little while to give a side glance round them, we fired, bringing one to his knees.

In the afternoon I borrowed General Lee's[2] double-

---

[1]*Cow Creek*—The Trail crossed this stream not far from Lyons, Kansas, two hundred and forty-nine miles from Westport.

[2]*General Elliott Lee*, brother to Sheriff Stephen Lee, murdered by the Pueblos in the revolt at Taos, January 19, 1847.

barrelled shot gun, and sallied out again for the slues, returning with five ducks, killed on the wing, in seven shots. We picked them in anticipation of a feast—something new. He (the General) had a saying, "rather tight on the American people;" and, when we were eating but once in twenty-four hours, his "rather tight" always elicited laughter, which, however, was "rather tight" on an empty stomach.

The morning following our stay at Cow Creek we were on the hunt for the all-engrossing game. The General accompanied us, for the first time, mounted on a large gray, fit for a charger, who, scenting the buffalo, was so unmanageable, he was sent back to the train. Mr. Chadwick (of St. Louis, on his first trip, like several of us, for pleasure), seeing a partially blind bull, concluded to "make meat" of him. Crawling up close, the buffalo scented him, and pitched about every way, too blind to travel straight or fast. Chad fired. The mad animal, directed by the rifle report, charged. How they did "lick it" over the ground! He was pursued, yelling, half in excitement, half in fear, till they were close to the wagons where the pursuer changed tack, only to be shot by one of the teamsters with a Nor'west fusil (Hudson Bay Company trade gun).

We led a horse with us the next hunt. A band of cows was seen. St. Vrain approached, and fired. Lupton gave chase on the led horse. After following him for three miles as fast as our horse and mule flesh would permit, we gave it up. Lupton returned unsuccessful.

We reached the Grand Arkansas[1] for noon camp;

---

[1]*Grand Arkansas*—So called to distinguish it from the Little Arkansas River, previously crossed. The Trail struck the Arkansas River a few miles below the town of Great Bend. Kansas, at a point half-way between Westport (the

here quite broad, with two feet of water, sandy bottom, and high sand buttes on either bank, as bare and cheerless as any misanthrope could wish.

Toward four o'clock in the afternoon's travel, I took a pair of holster pistols for a chase. I rode behind a sand butte, and on emerging from it, a band was tearing over the ground three hundred yards distant. Giving Paint the rein, we soon neared them, but as none were cows, I merely kept alongside, taking sight with my pistol, for practice, until the thought of Comanches[1] flashed across my mind, and turning Paint's head, I regained the party. To look at a buffalo, one would think that he could not run with such rapidity; but let one try to follow with an ordinary horse, and he is soon undeceived.

The next day, while riding among the hollows, far off the road, we found a mule. In order to secure it, we rode around several times, on each circuit gradually nearing, so as not to frighten by too sudden an approach. When, within thirty feet, a lasso was thrown over his neck. Mr. St. Vrain and a Mexican ran their horses after a band of cows. They were soon out of sight, scaring the buffalo for miles around from us, who returned to the wagons, then crossing Walnut Creek.[2]

We rode through two prairie-dog villages in the course of the day. Generally, as I have ascertained

---

present Kansas City, Mo.) and Bent's Fort. The distance was 265 miles either way. From this point the trail followed the river.

[1]*Comanches*—Plains Indian tribe of Shoshonean stock, at that date ranging over the prairies south of the Arkansas River in Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico. Their raids were chiefly against Texans and Mexicans.

[2]*Walnut Creek*—273 miles from Westport, near Great Bend, Kansas.

through inquiry and observation, the ground selected for the village is a level, gravelly, sandy soil. The spot constituting the village is dug full of holes a few steps apart, two feet or more in depth, and six or eight inches in diameter at the top, lessening at the bottom. Underneath the ground the burrows communicate, forming subterranean chambers, the whole of which, in some instances, covers many acres of ground. The excavated earth is thrown out at these holes, forming cones a foot or more in height, which can be seen some distance before reaching the village, and also serve to keep the rain from draining in and drowning the inmates.

The prairie dog (a species of marmot) is somewhat larger than the Norway rat. A scanty covering of rusty brown, or sandy hair, renders the similarity the more striking. Their heads are short, bearing some resemblance to that of a young bulldog.

It was quite amusing to watch their movements on top of the cones. On our approach, they barked, their short tails nervously fluttering and receiving a new impetus from the short, quick, and sharp tiny yelp, which they constantly uttered. When they thought themselves in danger, with an incredibly quick motion they threw themselves back in the holes, and immediately reappeared with an impertinent, daring bark, as if to say, "You can't get me!"

Others slowly "crawfished," hiding, by their singular way of crouching, their backs, until nothing but their heads and tails could be seen—these latter shaking tremulously. Succeeding a silence of a few minutes, after scaring in the "dogs," we could see, by lying flat on the ground so as to get the tops of the cones between the sky and our eyes, with the closest scrutiny, the head, here and there, of a dog almost imperceptibly moving, and with a cautious

reconnaissance to see if the coast were clear, he would show himself and then, with a knowing yelp, apprise his neighbors of the results of his investigation.

The snake and prairie owl hold companionship with these dogs, and not unfrequently their "pups" become victims to the vipers nestled in their bosoms. These villages are frequent. Often we came across them several miles from water. But whether they abstain from it wholly is a question not solvable by any mountain men with us. Very little or no dew falls in this region, so these strange animals do not depend upon this source to quench their thirst. They live on grass; as the season advances, for some distance around their villages, the ground is bare.

The grass in this region is short, early, and highly nutritious. It has a withered, brown appearance, even early in the spring, and is called buffalo grass, from the fact that it grows in the present buffalo range and forms their principal food. Mr. St. Vrain came in without meat, and we fared poorly on bread and coffee.

The day was unusually warm and clear, so that the vertical sunbeams beat down on us with almost scorching intensity. No water was near, and long before night we suffered with thirst. We endeavored to reach water until nine o'clock, or later, that night. But the rapidly failing oxen compelled us to stop without it. Having no water to prepare our food, we made a small *bois de vache* fire, by which we lit and smoked our pipes in sullen silence.

The oxen were turned out to shift for themselves, and several of the thirty men struck a bee line for the river, four or five miles distant. I was too tired to go, and had concluded to bear the torment until morning, when I heard the voice of Petout (one of

the Canadians) calling me. He came and whispered a few words in my ear. Thereupon we went to a wagon, where my friend produced a gallon keg of water from the front part. We drank without speaking, and never did water taste sweeter than that long draught. Petout stole the keg from a brother Creole, and after slaking our thirst we acted honorably, returning the keg and contents to its place, saying nothing about it.

It was two o'clock in the afternoon of the thirteenth of October that we arrived at Pawnee Rock,[1] a point of friable sandstone, jutting out from the rising ground to our right. It is thirty-five or forty feet in height, and its accessible front is cut with the names of ambitious travellers, who wish future generations to know that they in such a year journeyed along the Santa Fe Trail.

On the top of the rock, near the edge, was a deposit of earth, where the remains of some poor fellow had been placed. To die anywhere seems hard, but to heave the last breath among strangers, on the burning and desolate prairie, with no kind mother or sister to pay those soothing attentions which divest the bed of sickness of many of its pangs, is hard indeed. How must we pity the invalid, who, after being jolted in a wagon under the scorching rays of a summer's sun for days, until nature yields, is put into a mere hole, with his blanket for coffin and shroud, without a prayer or tear! Yet such is a frequent fate on the Santa Fe Trail.

---

[1] *Pawnee Rock*—The most famous landmark of the Old Santa Fe' Trail, taking its name, perhaps, from a battle between Pawnees and other Indians. Most of the rock has been quarried. What remains is near Pawnee Rock, Kansas, on the north bank of the Arkansas River.

We encamped on Ash Creek;[1] and, up to that time, we had been two days without meat. As Lupton said, we were getting "grease hungry."

In consultation next morning, we became desperate for something more substantial than short rations of bread and coffee. Bransford had a gun of which we entertained but a poor opinion; he determined before starting from camp to bring in "cow meat," at which we all laughed. He started by himself in the direction of Pawnee Fork[2]—at great risk, however, as the neighborhood was infested with hostile Indians. I joined a party of two who deviated to the right of the trace (trail). Toward twelve o'clock we saw a large band of buffalo, among them a number of cows, making their way, leisurely, to a small, intervening stream of water. Mr. St. Vrain, dismounting, took his rifle, and soon was on the "approach," leaving us cached[3] behind a rise of the ground to await the gun report. We lay down with our blankets, which we always carried strapped to the saddle, and with backs to the wind, talked in a low tone until, hearing Mr. St. Vrain's gun, we remounted. Again and again the rifle was heard, in hasty succession, and hastening to him, we found a fat cow stretched, and a wounded male limping slowly off. The horses were tied to the horns of our cow, and with butcher knives we divested the body of its fine coat. But finding myself a green hand, at least not an adept, in the mysteries of prairie butchering, I mounted Paint for the wounded

---

[1]*Ash Creek*—292 miles from Westport—thirty-one days out.

[2]*Pawnee Fork*—298 miles from Westport. The stream-mouth is at Larned, Kansas.

[3]*Cached*—Hidden, from the French *cacher*, to hide.—L. H. G.

fellow, who had settled himself, with his forelegs doubled up under him, three hundred yards from us. Mine was a high-pommelled Mexican saddle with wooden stirrups, and when once mounted, it was no easy matter to be dislodged. Paint went up to within twenty yards of the growling, wounded, gore-covered bull, and there stood trembling, and imparting some of his fear to myself.

With long, shaggy, dirt-matted, and tangled locks falling over his glaring, diabolical eyes, blood streaming from nose and mouth, he made the most ferocious looking object it is possible to conceive; and if nurses could portray to obstinate children in true colors the description of a mad buffalo bull, the oft-repeated "bugaboo" would soon be an obsolete idea.

While looking with considerable trepidation on the vanquished monarch of the Pawnee plains, he started to his feet; and with a jump, materially lessened the distance between us. This so scared Paint, that he reared backward, nearly sliding myself and gun over his tail, and before the bridle rein could be tightened, ran some rods; but turning his head, and setting the rowels of my spurs in his flanks, I dashed up within thirty feet of the bull; and, at the crack of the gun, the "poor buffler" dropped his head; his skin convulsively shook, his dark eyes, no longer fired with malignancy, rolled back in their sockets, and his spirit departed for the region of perpetual verdure and running waters beyond the reach of the white man's rifle or the keen lance of the prairie warrior.

Loading our animals with choice pieces of the tender cow, we left for the trail, much to the apparent satisfaction of some dozen of congregated wolves, loping and howling, or sitting on their

haunches, seemingly resolved to bide their time. Looking back, after we had left a short distance, we saw them fighting, with their tails whisking about quite lively, in the struggle for "spoils."

Ravens took the place of crows after leaving Walnut Creek. The latter seem to be limited to a few days' journey from the frontier cornfields. From the somber hue of the ravens, we are continually reminded of evil spirits, as they slowly flap their black wings overhead. And we feel almost the same reverence for them as do the superstitious mariners for the wild, screaming, darting, Mother Carey's chickens.

We were going slowly, by reason of our heavy loads of meat—the wagons were far away, stretched along the level trace, with their dazzling white sheets, while the oxen seemed mere pygmies, wending a snail-like pace. To the south were several hundred buffalo, confused by the sight of the wagons and by us. As we drew near, their bewilderment increased, and they scattered, a few within a hundred yards. We hurriedly dismounted, not holding our animals, and fired, while off with the clattering herd galloped Chadwick's horse and Paint, the meat flapping their sides accelerating their speed at every jump. I did not shout "my kingdom for a horse," to pursue the runaway Paint, but felt like sending a rifle ball as a check, though, fortunately, my gun was unloaded. Blas, our Mexican, seeing the mishap, came from the wagons, lasso in hand, and soon returned with the fugitive, after a chase of two miles, for which service I gave him *dos pesos* (two dollars) and *muy garcias* (many thanks).

Bransford was waiting for us at Pawnee Fork—a bold, limpid stream, with waters of a refreshingly cool sparkle—by his saddle, the fattest "cow" that

had "gone under" that trip. Nothing more was said in disparagement of his gun, skill, or bravery.

The immense herds feeding and running near camp enticed the men to many a "crawl" that evening, and more than one greenhorn took his first trembling and unsuccessful shot. Close by was the grave of one of Bent and St. Vrain's men, who, imprudently going too far in advance of the train last spring, was charged upon and scalped by the Pawnees in sight of his companions. Two others of the company had to run for it—just escaping.

Good humor reigned triumphant throughout camp. Canadian songs of mirth filled the air; and at every mess-fire pieces of meat were cooking *en appolas*; that is, on a stick sharpened, with alternate fat and lean meat, making a delicious roast. Among others, *boudins*[1] were roasting without any previous culinary operation, but the tying of both ends, to prevent the fat, as it was liquified, from wasting; and when pronounced "good," by the hungry, impatient judges, it was taken off the hot coals, puffed up with heat and fat, the steam escaping from little punctures, and coiled on the ground or a not particularly clean saddle blanket, looking for all the world like a dead snake.

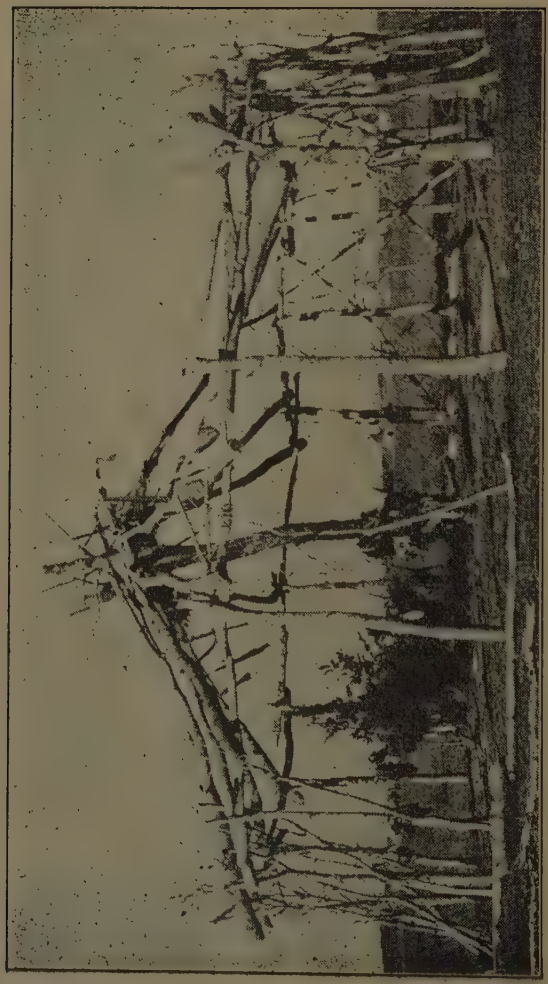
The fortunate owner shouts, "Hyar's the doin's, and hyar's the coon as *savys 'poor bull' from 'fat cow;'* freeze into it, boys!" and all fall to, with ready knives, cutting off savory pieces of this exquisitely appetizing prairie production.

At our mess-fire there was a whole side of ribs roasted. When browned thoroughly we handled the long bones, and as the generous fat dripped on our

---

[1]*Boudins*—The intestine in which is contained the chyme. L. H. G.

clothes, we heeded it not, our minds wrapped up with the one absorbing thought of satisfying our relentless appetites; progressing the work of demolition, our eyes closed with ineffable bliss. Talk of an emperor's table—why, he could imagine nothing half so good. The meal ended, the pipe lent its aid to complete our happiness; and at night we retired to the comfortable blankets, wanting nothing, caring for nothing. One remarkable peculiarity there is about buffalo meat—one can eat even beyond plentitude, without experiencing any ill effects.



ARAPAHO MEDICINE LODGE

CHAPTER II

The Santa Fe Trail

We awoke on the morning of the 16th with a Norther penetrating our blankets. The river Arkansas, almost dry, and on whose north bank we were encamped, was covered with floating particles of thin ice. Drinker had but two blankets, and on awakening we found him lying near the remains of the *bois de vache* fire, the light ashes of which, on his clothing, gave the appearance of snow. We wore extra clothing during the morning's ride, and Drinker looked bad from the effects of last night's wakefulness. We rode in silence for a time, somewhat in advance of the party, in vain attempts to encourage conversation. At length, after a long pause, he said, "St. Vrain and Folger sleep together; Chad and Bransford do too. Hadn't we better?" I acquiesced with pleasure. With saddles and overcoats, we had good pillows—the other clothing remained on us. Wherever camp was made, a place was selected by each couple for sleeping before dismounting (mountaineer custom); and, ere dark, the pallet of robes was always spread. We huddled around the miserable "cow wood" fires, chilled by the cold winds.[1]

We nooned next day near a United States mule train—the one from which the man was killed at Pawnee Fork by the Indians, who slipped up as they were at supper. The captain of the train also received an arrow through his coat collar.

---

[1]This part of the route, along the Coon Creeks (Edwards and Ford counties, between Larned and Dodge City, Kansas) was wholly without timber.

On the 19th, we made a late start—encamping several hours after dark. The weather grew much cooler, and the river valleys became much narrower than towards the States and the prairie was at an elevation of twenty-five or thirty feet above the bottom. Bleak hills of drifted sand met the eye on the opposite side of the river, giving shelter from the icy blasts to the different kinds of game, and too often to the unfriendly savage, who watches from his secure position and waits for fit opportunity to pounce upon, rob, and scalp weak parties of pale-faced enemies from the east. About four o'clock, Bransford killed, with his popgun, four buffalo out of a band of five, the nearest at fifty yards, and the other three as they retreated, the last at two hundred and fifty yards. Another evidence of his gun's little worthlessness!

If, when buffalo are shot at, one is brought to the ground and bleeds freely, and if the hunter is not discovered by sight or scent, the surviving buffalo will smell the blood and stop—often permitting themselves to be killed without running.

Two deer were brought, in the course of the evening; and, buffalo and venison being before the camp fires at the same time, the superiority of "fat cow" was fairly tested and acknowledged. While riding leisurely along, shortly before Bransford's inimitable shots, our attention was drawn to a band of buffalo running across our path, a half mile to the rear, and two hundred or more large wolves, which, with outstretched necks, and uplifted sharp heads, were in sure, noiseless, though swift pursuit. It was a magnificent sight to watch them dashing along—the poor buffalo straining their utmost to elude the sharp fangs of their persecutors—the wolves gaining at every stride. On they went, now

out of sight, now in the river, where the buffalo had the advantage; a cool swim invigorated the pursuers, who, loping with dripping hair, howled as they pressed on to victory.

On the 23rd, we came to the Cimarron Crossing[1] of the Arkansas River—the shorter of the two routes to Santa Fe, which here diverge—goes over the sand desert, void of water; and in the severe *jornadas* (marches), the oxen often drop with thirst—the other following the river bank to Bent's Fort, crosses a spur of the Rocky Mountains beyond—a longer, but safer and easier road.

The river at the Crossing was wide, and but a few inches in depth—a good ford. Seeing some men on the opposite side, I crossed on Paint, to learn the news—something seldom found and eagerly sought for on the plains. Captain Murphy (volunteer service), Roubideau, and two others, composed the party. They were the government express to the States. Roubideau[2] wished to buy Paint, offering me a fine bay horse, and, finally, ten dollars "to boot." But I felt, or fancied I felt, like the Arabian, and I thought of the long weary miles I had been carried—the exciting buffalo chases, with the accompanying feeling of true liberty, while coursing over the bare plains on his back. So, grasping my rifle, I turned his head without a reply, and, with a shout, urged him away in a gallop, loving him more than ever.

In the afternoon I went out with the hunters. The day was warm; the transition from the bottom

---

[1]*Cimarron Crossing*—A few miles west of the town of Cimarron, Kansas, in Gray County.

[2]Perhaps one of the Robidoux brothers, fur traders. Antoine Robidoux was often in Taos, and in 1846 was guide and interpreter to Gen. Kearny.

to the upland was rendered agreeable by a gentle breeze, which kept us in a proper state of coolness.

The mirage threw its optical illusion around everything; a buffalo seemed a shapeless mass, and, browsing, or running, its side or front turned to us, it would at times dwindle to a transparent shadow, or stalk forth in magnified proportions. The heat glimmering from the parched ground dazzled the eye, and we rode as if on the ocean—so shut up were we by the plain stretching away on all sides, no object to break the monotonous view except a stray bison or antelope.

Here, for the first time, we noticed the cactus—the same as the most common species in the States, only this had a ruddier, healthier color, probably owing to the continued, exposed action of the sun. We regained the trace before dark, and waited for the train.

On the 24th we passed Pawnee Forts, a grove of timber in which a war party of Pawnees[1] some years before, fortified themselves when besieged by a hostile tribe. Nothing now remains but a few crumbling logs to mark the site of this Indian bulwark.

At noon camp two Indians came in—runners from the grand war party of the Cheyennes[2]—the first wild Indians I had seen. They were innocent of clothing, with the exception of a cloth around the loins, a pair of moccasins, and a robe which was

[1]*Pawnees*—Powerful confederacy of tribes of Caddoan stock, with headquarters in the region about the Platte River. They waged relentless war with the Cheyenne and Sioux, but never—as a tribe—with the United States. However, many white men, in small parties, were attacked by the Pawnees.

[2]*Cheyennes*—Tribe of Algonkin stock, ranging between the Black Hills and the Arkansas River, and until 1857 on very friendly terms with the whites.

drawn round the body while walking; but, on sitting down, it was permited to fall off, leaving nude the body from the waist upward. Frank De Lisle talked by signs with them; and, after they ate and smoked, we learned that a party, numbering one hundred and twenty-two warriors, was encamped up the river on a scalp- and horse-stealing expedition in the Pawnee nation, with whom they were at war. The runners left us when their curiosity and appetites were satisfied.

In the morning, at ten o'clock, we were at the camp of the Indian braves. Many of the younger and more ardent met us; as they dashed by on their handsome horses, I thought with envy of the free and happy life they were leading on the untamed plains, with fat buffalo for food, fine horses to ride, living and dying in a state of blissful ignorance. To them, who know no other joys than those of the untaught savage, such a life must be the acme of happiness; for what more invigorating, enlivening pleasure is there than traversing the grand prairies, admiring the beauties of unkempt, wild, and lovely nature, and chasing the fleet-footed buffalo—to send the death-abiding arrows with the musical twang of the bowstring—then partaking of the choice parts, cooked by themselves, by their own fires; and afterward lying down to enjoy such sweet sleep as is within the comprehension of those only who have travelled and hunted on the lordly parks of the Far West?

Shaking hands, we (Messrs. St. Vrain, Folger, Chadwick, Drinker, and myself) dismounted, and sat in a row with several of the principal warriors. The pipe of red marble (catlinite), four inches in length, the bowl three in height, with a stem two feet in length, was passed around, containing a mixture of

tobacco and the bark of the red willow or swamp dogwood. First, one chief took the pipe, and after presenting its mouth to the sky, and to the ground, he drew four whiffs—blowing one towards the heavens, one to the earth, one to the east, the other to the west. Each Indian did the same. Some must have the pipe presented to them stem downward; others with the bowl resting on the ground; and others, again, with the stem upward. All have their peculiar medicine or religion, and they are as punctilious in this matter as ever was Hidalgo in politeness.

The smoke was inhaled by the Indians; who, after filling their lungs with repeated whiffs, blew it out in a continuous stream, from nostrils and mouth, in three distinct lines. I tried the same process, but coughing slightly in the attempt, the chiefs looked so solemn and stern, I felt almost afraid to try further, and contented myself with the usual way. The pipe was passed from right to left, then back from hand to hand, without smoking, to the first one, and the same round was repeated, until exhausted of its contents.

Being in want of a rope, I went with a piece of tobacco to an Indian, and by pointing to a neatly plaited rawhide rope, and holding out the tobacco, we made an exchange. Mr. St. Vrain made the party, through the chiefs, a present of tobacco and ammunition—not through love of the guttural-toned warriors, but to influence them in his favor; for they belong to the Cheyenne nation, with whom the firm of Bent, St. Vrain & Co. trade largely for buffalo robes.

A number of Indians went with us to "noon camp" in expectation of a feast, where they sat in a circle outside of the corral. A kettle of coffee, of which they are extravagantly fond, with a pile of bread,

was placed in their midst. Two officious Indians helped each one to a portion of bread, and one cup served several. They appeared to enjoy the luxury.

Before I could distinguish the men from the women in attendance, I asked Beauvais: "Is that the way all the squaws dress?"

"Which squaws?" said he.

"Why, those yonder," I replied, pointing to some Indians, whom I mistook for women. Often afterward my *compagnons de voyage* had many a hearty laugh at my "squaws."

Hitherto I had been wearing shoes, but for some powder and ball an Indian gave me a pair of moccasins, which I wore, discarding the shoes. The grass here is dry, by reason of the absence of dews; consequently the slippery sole of the shoes makes walking unpleasant and laborious—like taking two steps forward and slipping back one—but, with a pliant, neatly-fitting moccasin, one can catch hold with his toe on the ground, thereby aiding himself considerably.

On my neck was a black silk handkerchief; for this several Indians offered moccasins, but I refused to part with it. At last, one huge fellow caught me in his arms and hugged me very tight, at the same time grunting desperately, as if in pain; but one of the traders who understood savage customs, said that he was professing a great love for me. Who could withstand such pressing appeals? So pulling off the object of his love, I gave it to him; though, be it said, the grunt of a porker in the last stages of obesity would have been quite as intelligible and acceptable.

On the morning of the 26th we came to Chouteau's

Island,[1] taking its name from a trader who was here long and hotly besieged by a war party of Pawnees. Our wagon wheels needed repairing, and we stopped for a day to set tires, which had become loose by reason of the long drought.

The wagons started on the morning of the 27th, and I went with the hunters; but, after breasting the wind for six or eight miles, we struck the trace, so as to meet the wagons; and, by looking at the road, saw they had not passed. We went back a mile, and found the men cooking, and Frank De Lisle, assisted by two Canadians, shoeing the barefooted oxen. The legs of the ox are entangled in a rope to throw him down, and drawn up to prevent his kicking, while a partly circular piece of iron made to fit but the outside division of the hoof, is nailed on in the same manner, and with like nails, as a horse is shod.

In beating through a bottom for game, overgrown with high weeds, grass, and covered with fallen trees, Drinker, who was a short distance from the rest of us, shouted, "Here is a porcupine!" The porcupine gave unmistakeable evidence to our nasal organs of its being a polecat (skunk), and David (Mr. Folger's mule) carried from the field of sanguinary conflict that which rendered his proximity anything but agreeable. Even the rider did not escape scathless much to the amusement and feigned abhorrence of the jovially-inclined camp.

We passed by a medicine lodge of the Cheyenne Indians about twelve o'clock on the morning of the 28th—now abandoned, as a new one is erected

---

[1]*Choteau's Island*—Located just above the present town of Hartland, Kansas. Here was the Upper Ford of the Arkansas on the most direct route to Santa Fe' across the Cimarron Desert.

whenever it is deemed necessary, by their priests. It was made of cottonwood poles, from four to five inches in diameter, and eight to fifteen feet in length. In form, the whole thing approximated more to a hexagonal, than a circular form, though strictly neither. Its altitude was twenty feet, by twenty-five feet in diameter; and the poles composing the sides were planted perpendicularly, from the top of which, other smaller poles, composing the roof, were fastened, converging to the center perpendicular post. Among the roof poles, or rafters, boughs of trees were rudely interwoven to exclude the sun's rays. Near the apex, on the inside, was pendant an untanned, long-haired buffalo bull's hide, with the lower hip attached, by strips of skin, painted on the one side red, the other black. The poles were daubed in the same manner. In a well-trodden, clean spot of ground within the lodge were two oblong holes a few inches wide and about two feet in length; around, and in them were a number of small sticks, painted the two colors.[1]

A few steps from the outside was a "sweat lodge" (steam bath) so called by the mountaineers into which the medicine men enter before performing their sacred duties. It is nearly, or quite, four feet in height, and five in breadth at its base; the general contour is not unlike an inverted round basket. In the center is dug a hole similar, in shape, to a cog-wheel, where are placed heated stones on which water is poured to generate steam and cause perspi-

---

[1]*Medicine Lodge* (Sun Dance)—An annual ceremony with most Plains Indians, lasting about a week, and very spectacular. It is still performed by the Cheyenne and Arapaho in Oklahoma in summer, generally near either Cantonment or Calumet. The description here given would indicate that the author saw a lodge built by the Arapaho, rather than the Cheyenne. See illustrations.

ration. After this, they plunge, reeking with sweat, into the river. In the Indian village, I have seen them jump from their hot lodges into the water, when the margin of the stream was ice-bound. I thought the shock too severe, but on inquiry ascertained that no ill effects ever ensue.

To those fond of speculating on the origin and probability of the North American Indians belonging to the lost tribes of Israel I would here say that these Indians purify themselves before entering upon the performance of their religious duties.

The evening following the visit to the lodge we encamped near the banks of the Arkansas, where a creek fringed with timber made a graceful curve, emptying its modicum of water into the main stream. The pleasing position and grouping of the trees render this spot picturesque, and it is well known to travellers as the Pretty Encampment.[1]

Before the break of grey dawn, Messrs. St. Vrain, Folger, and Chadwick left us for the Fort, some eighty miles distant.

Early the morning of the 30th we awoke with our bedding, selves, the firewood and ground wet with rain. All rode sulkily along, having had an unsatisfactory breakfast. The oxen slipped on the muddy trail, the drivers uttering *sacre* and *avances* with more than the usual emphasis. Now and then a Canadian ditty would break forth, but it was no use attempting songs; the charm for the nonce was broken, and it died away, as if choked by the damp atmosphere. Riding in a wet saddle, in rain-saturated clothes, and inhaling the steam from our clammy, unpleasant animals, caused feelings most undesirable.

[1]*Pretty Encampment*—Near the Colorado-Kansas line.

We reached the Salt Bottom[1] in the morning, so called from the sale marshes and saline efflorescence appearing in spots, as if flour had been sprinkled on the ground.

We travelled long after dark by the bright moon, which cast a shade, or lit up the crawling train, as it alternately appeared and disappeared behind the fleeting clouds. We crowded together, listening with much interest to tales of western life; amid the silent intervals, songs and shouts of the drivers were heard far in the rear. Our mules out-walked the oxen, and we were often too far in advance for safety; then, stopping for the slow train, we would dismount, light our pipes, and chat away with much satisfaction, for the early rain had ceased, and the sun had dried our clothes. We were, however, living meanly on the flesh of worked-down oxen, too poor to travel, with about as much masticable flesh on them as in the cottonwoods lining the river banks.

On October 31st we crossed Big Sandy Creek,[2] a large bed of sand, one hundred yards in width, covered with water during very rainy seasons, but then dry. The Indians camp upon it a half day's journey from its mouth, where there is much water. Below that point the sand absorbs it. Our teams had to be coupled to get the wagons through the sinking mouth.

Three of us, riding up the creek for antelope, saw, on the horizontal limbs of a cottonwood, two Indian graves, thirty or more feet from the ground. Short

---

[1]*Big Salt Bottom*—Opposite the mouth of Two Butte Creek, and just above Wild Horse Creek, very near the town of Holly (Prowers Co.) Colo.

[2]*Big Sandy Creek*—53 miles from Bent's Fort, a few miles east of Lamar, Colorado. On this stream, some thirty miles above the mouth, occurred the massacre of friendly Cheyennes by Chivington, 1864.

poles were tied transversely, from one limb to another, and the deceased, wrapped in many folds of robes with a few ornaments, was tied on this scaffolding with thongs of rawhide. This mode of burial is preferred to interment in the ground, as the wolves scratch the bodies up again; and, besides, the Indians have no implements for digging the compact gravel. There may be some superstition connected with the present form of burial—be that as it may, it has always been the custom to put the bodies in trees. The wind had blown to the ground some of the robes and blankets from the corpses, and they were torn in tatters by the wolves.

We nooned at the roots of a fallen cottonwood called Dead Indian. The lower jawbone of a woman was picked up by Bransford. The teeth were sound and regular; I put it in my bullet pouch for safe keeping.

There is much that is singular about the antelope, it being a most inquisitive creature; its curiosity, like Eve's, often results in its downfall. While hunting, before reaching camp, a band came running past. Bewildered and fascinated, they described two complete circles around us, during which we gave them several shots, though their motions were too swift for sure aim. A handkerchief on a gun rod will cause them, now advancing, now retreating, to approach within rifle range.

The mountaineers spin long yarns of their exploits in hunting and tolling game; and, they say that standing on the head and shaking the legs in air is a successful and favorite mode! Marcellus St. Vrain,[1] brother to our leader, is noted in coming this dodge over them.

---

[1]*Marcellus (Marcelline) St. Vrain*—A trader in the employ of the firm. He had a Pawnee wife, and was often

At night the rain fell and the wind blew, driving the smoke in our faces; all went to bed early, leaving me sitting by the fire. It was my favorite pastime to take a blanket and lie on the ground with it wrapped around me, with back to the wind, apart from the noisy camp, to read or scrawl a few words in a blank book of the events of the day, or to think of friends far away; or, perchance, nodding, and in a dreamy state, with the warm sun beating on me, build castles in the air.

Many object to this idle run of thought, as it exerts, they say, a pernicious influence on the mind; that it drives away rational, sober thought, and distracts the mind from business; but what satisfaction it is, especially on the prairie, where there is no mental occupation, to think of things not in our power to possess. For, during the brief moments we indulge in this train, we are as much gratified and happy as if in actual possession. And why deprive one of this poor luxury? With myself it was like the two-mile heats in races—"once around and repeat;" for on every opportunity, I endeavored to resume the thread of the last reverie, and dream away, sometimes in a conflict with the Indians, or rescuing a fair maiden from the hands of ruthless savages; or, again, chasing buffalo, and feasting on the fat of the land. Anyone in the Far West is romantically inclined.

We awoke in the morning, again drenched, cold, and uncomfortable, with saturated clothes hanging on us. A kettle of beans was on the fire cooking when the men went to bed, and, while I was punching the savages in imagination, I had punched the fire too much. The consequence was a mess of burnt

---

at Fort St. Vrain (Fort George) at the junction of St. Vrain Creek and the South Platte, near Greeley, Colo.

beans; some tough, stringy, old steer meat, emitting such an unpleasant smell that to eat it seemed almost a sin. Maybe the fellows didn't swear at me! Tell it not in Gath! But I laughed until their woebegone faces relaxed into good-humored smiles.

The pelting rain enlivened the scene, and Drinker, General Lee and I started for the Fort, nearly forty miles distant. The sorry breakfast sat uneasily on our craving stomachs, and we spurred our animals over the ground for miles without speaking, with the rain falling just enough to penetrate our clothing, and cause suicidal feeling. Our ideas of the beautiful had fled, and after a weary day's trot, we arrived in sight of the Fort, where our animals were soon unsaddled and turned out at the gate, to wander in quest of grass. Going in, we found Mr. St. Vrain, who introduced us to William Bent,[1] a partner, Doctor Hempstead, and several traders. We sat down to a table for the first time in fifty days,[2] and ate with knives, forks and plates.

A room was given us, in company with several government teamsters, in which to sleep; had our inclination been consulted, the open air would have been preferred to the unpleasant sensation of oppression felt in being shut up within four walls. But no matter, we didn't have to guard against Indians.

I arose early in the morning, and going on top of the fort, had a good view of the Spanish Peaks to the Northwest (Southwest), apparently fifteen miles distant—in reality one hundred and twenty. They

[1]*Colonel William Bent* (1809-1869)—Builder of Bent's Old Fort; on the Arkansas from 1824-1869; called "Grey Beard" by Cheyennes, "Roman Nose" by the Kiowa and Comanche; Indian trader, rancher, merchant prince. Leading spirit of Bent, St. Vrain & Co.

[2]*Fifty days* (September 12 to November 1st)—530 miles. Ten or eleven miles per day!

were of a dull gray color; while a lower range was dazzling white, all perpetually covered with snow. To the Northeast (Northwest) a faint outline of a mountain was described—James's or Pike's Peak!

William Bent and Marcellus St. Vrain (the former a partner and the latter a trader in the company's employ) have Indian wives. In the fort was a *melange* of traders and employers, government officers[1] and subordinates, Indians, Frenchmen, and hunters.

The fort is a quadrangular structure formed of *ado'bes*, or sun-dried brick. It is thirty feet in height, and one hundred feet square. At the northeast corner, and its corresponding diagonal, are bastions of a hexagonal form, in which are a few cannon. The fort walls serve as the back walls to the rooms, which front inward on a courtyard. In the center of the court is the "robe press," and lying on the ground was a small brass cannon, burst in saluting General Kearney.[2]

The roofs of the houses are made of poles and a layer of mud, a foot or more thick, with a slight inclination, to run off the water. There was a billiard table in a small house on top of the fort, where the *bourgeois*[3] and visitors amused themselves, and,

---

[1]Bent's Fort was a private building. But during the Mexican war, William Bent permitted the government to use it as a supply depot, and hospital, without payment of any sort. In 1852, when he wished to sell the fort to the government, the War Department would not pay his price. William Bent thereupon placed gunpowder in the building and blew it to pieces.

[2]*General Stephen Watts Kearny*—Commander of the Army of the West in the Mexican War, conqueror of New Mexico and California. Kearny's command passed Bent's Fort on the march west on August 2, 1846.

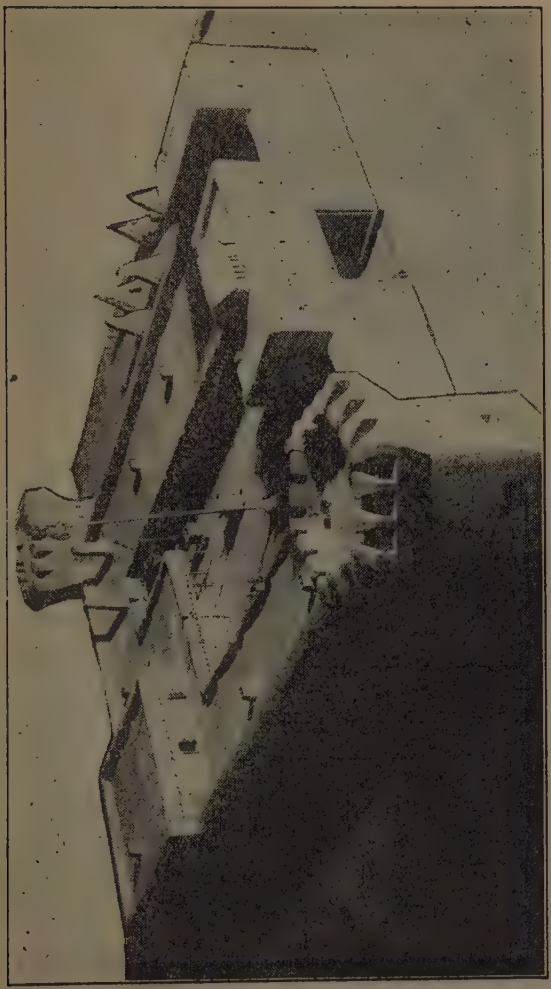
[3]*Bourgeois*—French trapper term for owner of a fort, independent trader, boss.

in the clerk's office, contiguous, a first-rate spy-glass with which I viewed the *caballada* coming from the grazing ground seven miles up the river. In the belfry, two eagles, of the American bald species, looked from their prison. They were two years old, but their heads do not become bald until attaining the age of three. Antelope and other fresh meats were scarce, and the eagles had to starve two days. One evening they were let loose; one escaped unharmed; the other flew a short distance, and a Cheyenne shot him for the feathers, to adorn his own ugly head. "*Enfant de Garce!*" muttered I. How I wanted to retaliate on the savage!

On the evening of the 3rd of November, three men arrived from the direction of the States, on express, from a government train, of twenty-eight wagons and one hundred and sixty mules, which had been robbed by the Pawnees; one man killed, several wounded, a wagon burnt, all the mules but seven taken; and, to use their euphonic language, "the devil to pay"—Uncle Sam, we suppose.

One of the express came forward and shook hands with me. He was a lieutenant of Captain Holt's company of Missouri volunteers. The regiment had been ordered out, but disbanded. Buchanan (the lieutenant) was not to be deprived of a visit to *Nueva Mejico;* so, doffing his clothes of the military cut, he left Fort Leavenworth[1] as wagon-master of the train just robbed. Buck (as he was familiarly called by way of abbreviation) was full of fun, and he related the circumstance with as much *sang froid*, as if he had done nothing else all his life but fight Indians.

[1]*Fort Leavenworth*—On the Missouri River in Kansas, above Westport.



BENT'S OLD FORT

CHAPTER III

The Cheyenne Village

On the evening of the 8th of November I started for the Indian village with John Smith.[1] Yes! John Smith! The veritable John Smith! After leaving cities, towns, steamboats, and the civilized world, and traversing the almost boundless plains; here, at the base of the Rocky Mountains, among buffalo, wild Indians, traders, and Spanish mules, have I found a John Smith. And, probably for fear the name might become extinct, he has named his little half-breed boy John, whom we called Jack for brevity's sake.

Piérre, a good Canadian, drove the four-mule wagon, in which was our bedding, a little provision, and an outfit for mule trading. Smith's squaw, a woman of thirty years or thereabout, with prominent cheek bones and other Indian peculiarities, rode astride of a high-pommelled Indian saddle. The horse was decked out with a saddle cover of blue cloth, worked according to fancy, with many-colored beads, and tin pellets pendant from the fringed edges, covering him from withers to rump. Little Jack, three or four years of age, clung behind his mother, plainly showing in his complexion and features the mixture of American and Indian blood. His gray eyes were continually centered on me; but I could say nothing intelligible to him, as he spoke only the Cheyenne tongue. A boy, ten years old, son of Smith's squaw (a full-blood), cantered along on a pony.

---

[1] *John Smith*—"Po-o-om-mats" (Gray Blanket), a Missourian, trader in Bent's employ; Jack Smith was shot by Chivington's men on Sand Creek in 1864.

We went down to the mouth of the *Rio de Las Animas Perdidas* (a Spanish-Mexican term signifying River of Lost Souls) or *Purgatoire* (Picketwire), and stopped in a grove of young cottonwood. Hard-by, in a marshy spot, grew many rushes, on which our *caballada* fared well. Ours was a nice little camp. The sun, setting, cast long shadows through the trees on the gray grass so calm and solemn; the smoke curled upward in a continuous blue line, losing itself high in the open space; and the air was cool enough to be bracing, and to render the fire agreeable. On an outspread robe at one side of the fire sat Jack and his mother, Smith sharing the seat with them; myself, cross-legged, looked round with silent satisfaction and admiration; and Piérre, a short distance off, was gathering wood for the night.

The squaw lifted the coffeepot from the coals, and we unstrapped our tincups from our saddles. With dried, pounded buffalo meat, and the *sine qua non* of the mountaineer—the pipe—we did well, talking and smoking until the fire grew dim, when we separated. Wrapping up in my blankets, and covering my nose from the frost, I watched the stars in the clear, blue vault above, and listened to the distant howl of the coyote, until I fell asleep.

"The wolves have preyed; and look, the gentle day
Before the wheels of Phoebus, round about,
Dapples the East with spots of drowsy gray."

Shortly after sunrise we were once more in the saddle. Our animals, with rush-distended stomachs, gave prospect of doing good service. The route passed over was the same over which Lee, Drinker, and I had passed the day we started in advance of the train. We were then too wet to enjoy anything.

The soap plant (Amole or Yucca Angustifolia) dotted the prairie, here and there, in the strange-looking garb of green. Its root is much used by the New Mexicans in washing clothes—more especially the finer goods—it not possessing alkaline properties in so great a degree as the common soap of wood ashes. The plant is an evergreen, not dissimilar in general appearance to the palmetto of Louisiana and Texas.

We had much to speak of: Smith, of the States; and, to my many inquiries of the Indians, he expatiated at length on their customs, food, and easy life. Of their viands, he lauded dog's flesh to the very skies; on my expressions of abhorrence at the bare thought, he said, "I bet I make you eat dogmeat in the village, and you'll say it's good, and the best you ever hid in your meatbag (stomach)."

"No you will not," I rejoined. "The mere idea is enough to sicken one—slimy pupmeat—ugh! Not enough of the carniverous in me for that. Besides, buffalo meat, in my opinion, cannot be surpassed for delicacy of flavor, in this or any other country."

"Well, hoss, I dock off buffler, and then if thar's any meat that runs can take the shine outen dog, you can slide."

I still persisted that there was no convincing me. And though still believing that "dog" could not pass in this country, circumstances bring us down to many things which before the event seem impossible; and no one can tell but that a piece of old mule would be quite acceptable, ere passing through the fiery ordeal of a year in the Far West. Indeed, we had already eaten the next thing to mule and nothing—broken-down steer-meat. Oh grief! My jaws ache to think of the soggy *dejeuners*, in the soaking rain, of

old steer; or as the Canadians termed it, *"sacre' boeuf."*

In a narrow bottom, well sheltered by abrupt hills in the background, we made our stay for the night. Turning out our animals, and fixing things right, Smith and I waded the river, where, among the underbrush and tall marshgrass, we had a few shots at a band of white-tailed deer.

At twelve o'clock next day (November 10th), we came to three Indian lodges, where we found William Bent's squaw and her mother[1] on their way to the Fort. We were invited to the back part of the lodge, where dried, pounded cherries, mixed with buffalo marrow, and a root, eaten raw, and resembling in taste and appearance the Jerusalem artichoke, were set before us. After whiffing the long pipe with the clever inmates, we remounted.

Toward evening Smith pointed to some objects, inquiring of me what they were, but I could not guess aright. "That's the village," said he. Mountain men can distinguish objects, which to a novice in prairie ken have no tangible form or size. By sundown we were at the lodges, whose conical shape and dusky yellow hue looked odd, but welcome to our tired eyes and limbs.

It is an Indian rule that the first lodge a stranger enters on visiting a village is his home during his stay—whether invited or not, it is all the same—and, as we wished to be at the Lean Chief's, we inquired for him. Without saying a word, or going in the lodge first, we unsaddled in front of it, putting

---

[1]Wm. Bent's wife, Owl Woman, daughter of White Thunder (1763-1838) Keeper of the Cheyenne Medicine Arrows. Owl Woman died in 1847, and Bent later married her sister, Yellow Woman. The mother's name was Tail Woman.

our "possibles" (baggage) in the back part, the most honored and pleasant place, for there is no passing by, or other annoyance.

The owner occupies the back of the lodge, which is given up for a guest; and the Lean Chief's squaw and daughters removed his robes, etc., to one side. The women and children crowded around us while unsaddling; the strange dress and appearance of the boys attracted my attention; which latter, from infancy to the age of six and seven, go without a particle of clothing, *dans la costume a l'Adam*—a string of beads around the neck. The girls are clothed from their earliest hours.

The white man is always welcome with the Cheyenne, as he generally has *mok'-to-bo-mah'-pe* (black water)—coffee. We went into the lodge; the grave-looking head, *Vip-po-nah,* or the Lean Chief, and his two solemn coadjutors, shook hands with us, with the salutation of *"Hook-ah-hay! Num-whit!"*—equivalent to "Welcome, How do you do?" Then they relapsed into silence. Water was handed us to drink, as they suppose a traveller must be thirsty after riding; then meat was set before us, as they think a tired man needs refreshment. When we had finished, the pipe was passed around, during which soothing pastime the news was exchanged.

There is much to admire in this praiseworthy forbearance; and, although the Indians are as curious as any people, yet, through their consideration, the cravings of thirst and hunger are first satisfied; then, under the communicative influence of the long pipe, the topics of the season are discussed.

A lodge, generally, is composed of seventeen or more slender poles of pine, three inches in diameter at the butts, finely tapering to the small ends, and eighteen to twenty-three or-four feet in length. These

poles are tied together a few inches from the small ends, with the butts resting on the ground, so that the frame resembles a cone, over which a covering of buffalo skin is neatly fitted, divested of the hair and rendered pliant by means of the dubber—an adze-shaped piece of iron fitted to an angular section of elk's horn—which chips off pieces of the hard skin until it is reduced to the requisite thinness. Brains are then rubbed on it, making it still softer. The skins are then cut and sewed together with an awl and sinew, so that they fit neatly the pole frame. By rolling up the lower edge of this covering, it makes a commodious, airy habitation in summer; and, by closing all the apertures, a warm shelter in winter. At the apex, an opening is left, through which the ends of the poles protrude, and by which the smoke finds its way out. The fire is built in the center and to prevent the smoke being driven back by the wind, there are two flaps or continuations of the upper skins, with poles attached on the outside. These flaps they shut, shift, or extend, as occasion requires.[1]

We made known our business, and immediately a "crier" was sent out. Throwing back the skin door of the lodge, he protruded his head and then his whole body, and uttered in a stentorian voice, something similar to the following: *"Hibbolo, hibbolo! Po-ome, ho-o-o, nah wah-he, se-ne-mone, nah tah-tive woh-pshe-o-nun nah, mok-ta-bo woh-pshe-o-nun, nah woh-pshe-o-nun ah-wokst"*; meaning, in regular succession, that "Blackfoot (Smith) had come for mules; and all who wished, to come and trade; that

[1]"The Cheyenne Tipi." See *American Anthropologist*, (new series) Vol. 17, No. 4, for my complete description of this tent. W. S. C.

we had tobacco, blue blankets, black (deep blue) blankets, white blankets, knives, and beads."

It is contrary to Indian medicine, or religion, to pass between the landlord (owner of the lodge) and the fire, for they say it dissolves friendship, and any infringement of this custom is looked upon with displeasure.

We were very comfortably situated; the lodge was large enough to admit of our lying with feet to the fire—made Indian fashion in a small space, and heaped continually in a rounded, compact form. As the night waned apace, we were visited by the prominent men, who, in a dignified manner, shook hands with us, and sat with crossed legs, propounding questions, meantime passing the pipe. As each Indian appeared at the lodge entrance *Hook-a-hay* or *num-whit* (the mode of congratulation) escaped his lips; to which a like response was given by the landlord, or by us.

We sat in our places at the back part, and the Indians, according to rank, took seats to our left, on mother earth or on their own robes. To the right was our host; and, if a man entitled to notice by right of seniority or daring deeds of valor entered, those inferior in honors gave place next the white man (us). Sometimes Indians of equal rank were in the lodge at the same time, and then a whispered dispute as to the "upper seat" would be carried on with much gesticulatory motion.

Their dusky faces, viewed by the yellow blaze, together with the unintelligible jargon, filled me with new and strange thoughts; and, when the old crones swung the seething black pot of meat from the fire of dried sticks, I could not but think of the gipsy tribes, who possess many traits resembling theirs;

and who, in common with them, have an unconquerable love for roaming.

One by one the grave councillors took their leave. When the fire grew low, all had retired to bed but myself, puffing slowly a pipe, uninterruptedly thinking of all the analogies written (that I had read) among the Indians, Hebrews, and Gypsies. But presently, through the wreaths of white smoke, the sleeping face of our host's daughter, just visible in the expiring light, intercepted the delivery of a grave dissertation, in imagination, to an intelligent audience. Then I mused of her awhile, until the neglected pipe, dropping out of my hand, roused me from a doze. So, reaching around for the blankets, and cutting a piece of dried "buffler" to chew, I folded my hands over my breast, and traced with my eye the lodge-poles running way up to a center, which, in the vacillating, dying flame, were alternately revealed and hidden, until I thought I was dead and sentenced forever to run backward up and down seventeen lodge-poles for the amusement of a merry set of laughing devils. In that state I fell asleep, undisturbed except for the occasional baying of a village dog, or the dismal howl of a coyote.

Early in the morning we sat round the fire, waiting for the host's meat to cook, to which we contributed the coffee—the most important and rare addition.

The Indians talked of moving to the "Big Timbers,"[1] a few miles above, and soon the village was

---

[1]*The Big Timbers*—A favorite camp-ground of the Indians and whites, a grove of gigantic cottonwoods formerly extending from Big Sandy Creek up to Caddo Creek, a distance of thirty miles. Lamar, Colorado is near the middle of this vanished grove, in 1846 already much reduced in size.

in commotion, the young men driving up their different bands of horses, the squaws catching them. Some took down the lodges, and tying the poles in two bundles, fastened them on either side of a mule or horse, like the shafts of a dray, the lower ends dragging the ground. Behind the horse a tray-shaped basket or hoop, latticed with hide-thongs, was tied on these poles, in which were put the children too young to ride alone, and other things not easily carried on a horse. Some of the mules were saddled, and on each side were slung square bags of thick buffalo hide divested of hair, in which stone hammers, dubbers, wooden bowls, horn spoons, etc., were thrown.

The skin of which these convenient hampers are made is called *par fleche*—a French term Anglicised, as are many other foreign words in the mountains, by general usage. Its literal meaning is "arrow fender," or "warder," for from it the prairie Indians construct their almost impenetrable shields. Moccasin soles is the principal use, for which it is admirably suited, being pliant to the foot, while it serves as a protection from the cactus growing so prolifically in this country. Without care, one in walking will stumble over these, and the long, slender thorns, penetrating with ease, cause an acute, stinging pain, worse even than nettles. Being without socks most of the time (and none to be had), often, while hunting, a hole would wear in the toe of my moccasin, and unavoidably, the thorns would stick most painfully. My big toe looked like a lady's finger punctured in sewing. (I hope the ladies will pardon the simile.)

The village was, ere long, in motion. Looking back to the old site we saw nothing but eighteen thin pillars of smoke finding their way to the upper air, marking where had been the lodges; pieces of old,

cast-off robes, and the usual debris of a deserted Indian camp; which, with a few snarling coyotes and large gray wolves, were all the signs of life remaining of the noisy, bustling town.

We crossed a large bottom, where we had a fine opportunity of seeing the moving village to great advantage. First went four or five lodges; and, following after, our wagon, with fifteen or twenty Indians talking to Po-ome, or "signing" with me. Young men were scattered in every direction, galloping to and fro, chasing stray animals, or coursing over the prairie for amusement.

Each lodge had its own band of horses, which presented a strange appearance; eighteen or more bands close to each other, walking along but not mixing; each band following a favorite mare, or, perchance, a woebegone scrawny mule, not worth the powder and ball to kill it. It is a strange and general fact that *caballadas* are mostly led by a no-account mare or mule—the greatest devil in the drove. They follow their erratic leader everywhere, like sheep, whether jumping, running, or grazing.

The animals, with the lodge-pole *travees* (drays), jogged along, no care being taken of them, while the fat little inmates laughed, or with wondering eyes stared at us silently.

The young squaws take much care of their dress and horse equipments; they dashed furiously past on wild steeds, astride of the high-pommelled saddles. A fancifully worked cover, worked with beads or porcupine quills, making a flashy, striking appearance, extended from withers to rump of the horse, while the riders evinced an admirable daring, worthy of Amazons. Their dresses were made of buckskin, high at the neck, with short sleeves—or rather none at all—fitting loosely and reaching obliquely to the knee,

giving a relieved, Diana look to the costume; the edges scalloped, worked with beads, and fringed. From the knee downward the limb was encased in a tightly fitting leggin, terminating in a neat moccasin —both handsomely worked with beads. On the arms were bracelets of brass, which glittered and reflected in the radiant morning sun, adding much to their attractions. In their pierced ears shells from the Pacific shore were pendant, and to complete the picture of savage taste and profusion, their fine complexions were eclipsed by a coat of flaming vermillion.

Altogether it was a pleasing and desirable change from the sight of the pinched waists and constrained motions of the women of the States, to see these daughters of the prairie dressed loosely—free to act, unconfined by the ligatures of fashion. I do not wish to be understood that I prefer seeing our women dressed *a la Cheyenne*; the ornaments gaudy and common, and altogether unfit for a civilized woman to wear; but here where novelty constitutes the charm. 'twas indeed a relief to the eye.

Many of the largest dogs were packed with a small quantity of meat, or something not easily injured. They looked queer, trotting industriously under their burdens; and, judging from a small stock of canine physiological information, not a little of the wolf was in their composition. These dogs are extremely muscular and are compactly built.

We crossed the river on our way to the new camp; the alarm manifested by the *ki-kum*—children—in the lodge-pole drays, as they dipped in the water, was amusing. The little fellows, holding their breaths, not daring to cry, looked imploringly at their inexorable mothers, and were encouraged by words of

approbation from their stern fathers. Regaining the grassy bottom, we once more went in a fast walk.

The different colored horses, the young Indian beaux, the bold, bewildering belles, and the newness of the scene, were gratifying in the extreme to my unaccustomed senses. After a ride of two hours, we stopped, and the chiefs, fastening their horses, collected in circles to smoke the pipe and talk, letting their squaws unpack the animals, pitch the lodges, build fires, arrange the robes, and, when all was ready, these "lords of creation" dispersed to their several homes to wait until their patient and enduring spouses prepared some food. I was provoked, nay, angry, to see the lazy, overgrown men do nothing to help their wives; and, when the young women pulled off their bracelets and finery to chop wood, the cup of my wrath was full to overflowing. In a fit of indignation, I pronounced them ungallant and savage in the true sense of the word. A wife, here, is indeed a help-meet.

Once more ensconced in the back part of *Vip-po-nah's* lodge, we felt at home. A large wooden bowl of meat was set before us, to which, with coffee, we did ample justice.

The horses belonging to an Indian community are numerous. With us, there were nearly or quite two hundred, of different colors and sizes, scattered over the gentle hillsides in picturesque groups.

After two days' entertaining sojourn at the village, we left, with four fine mules, for the Fort, which place we reached at the close of the second evening. There we found the employees reloading the wagons for a start to Santa Fe. But being pleased with Indian life, I returned with Smith and William Bent, with full complements of goods for robe trading. We encamped the first night on an island in the river,

with plenty of wood and grass near, and sheltered from the winds by a patch of high weeds.

Crossing the clear stream, on the firm sandy bottom, we regained the trace early in the morning, and at night, after a continuous day's jog, we were at the village. William Bent stayed in his own lodge; Smith and I in that of *Vip-po-nah,* by whom we were welcomed.

The air was much cooler than before; quantities of thin ice floated down the gliding river current. It was right pleasant to get back and be surrounded by Indians.

In *Vip-po-nah's* lodge was his grandson, a boy six or seven months old. Every morning his mother washed him in cold water, and sent him out to the air to make him hardy: he would come in from his airing about half frozen. How he would laugh and brighten up as he felt the warmth of the fire! Being a boy, the parents have great hopes of him as a brave and chief (the acme of Indian greatness); his father dotes upon him, holding him in his arms, singing in a low tone, and in various ways showing his extreme affection.

The girls do not receive much attention from the father; they are reared to implicit obedience, and with a feeling of inferiority to the males. What a happy contrast does the state of society show in enlightened countries, where woman is in her proper sphere, loved and looked up to as an adviser and friend—here a mere "hewer of wood and drawer of water"—a nonentity, a mere cypher—treated as a slave, and unnoticed. It is, indeed, an almost inappreciable blessing that we live in an age of progressive civilization—an age in which true worth is regarded, irrespective of sex; though there is yet room for improvement.

CHAPTER IV

Peculiarities

The morning came, and we were somewhat occupied in trading, but robes were scarce, the buffalo hair not being in prime order.

We were invited to Gray Eye's lodge, to a feast, early in the day. Sitting down, after shaking hands, a wooden bowl of choice pieces of fat meat was set before us. We used our own knives and fingers. Gray Eyes had two wives, and twelve children, two of whom—fine looking boys of fifteen and thirteen summers, respectively—were in the lodge; their father's eye beamed on them fondly, when he spoke of their killing buffalo from horseback, with bow and arrow. The eldest had an open, frank countenance—the reverse of his father, whose features plainly showed duplicity, and his small, gray eye—hence his cognomen—twinkled replete with the rascality for which he is noted.

It is Indian custom, that whatever is set before the guest, belongs to him; and, he is expected to take that which he does not eat, home with him; so we stuck our knives in some of Gray Eye's fat slices, when the pipe was finished.

Smith's son Jack took a crying fit one cold night, much to the annoyance of four or five chiefs, who had come to our lodge to talk and smoke. In vain did the mother shake and scold him with the severest Cheyenne words, until Smith, provoked beyond endurance, took the squalling youngster in hands; he "shu-ed," and shouted, and swore, but Jack had gone too far to be easily pacified. He then sent for a bucket of water from the river, and poured cupful

after cupful on Jack, who stamped, and screamed, and bit, in his puny rage. Notwithstanding, the icy stream slowly descending until the bucket was emptied; another was sent for and again and again the cup was replenished and emptied on the blubbering youth. At last, exhausted with exertion, and completely cooled down, he received the remaining water in silence, and, with a few words of admonition, was delivered over to his mother, in whose arms he stifled his sobs, until his heart-breaking grief and cares were drowned in sleep. What a devilish mixture Indian and American blood is!

The Indians never chastise a boy, as they think his spirit would be broken, and cowed down, and, instead of a warrior, he would be a squaw—a harsh epithet, indicative of cowardice—and they resort to any method but infliction of blows, to subdue a refractory scion.

Jack has three names: that of Jack, so called by the whites, and two Indian ones—Wo-pe-kon-ne and O-toa-vout-si—the former meaning "White Eyes"—a nickname—the latter, his proper title—"Buck Deer."

For pastime, I began a glossary of the Cheyenne tongue, to facilitate its acquirement; the visitors, thinking me a queer customer (mah-son-ne—a fool—as they were pleased to denominate me and my vocabularic efforts), replied willingly to my inquiries of "*Ten-o-wast*?—what is it?" at the same time pointing to any object whose name I wished to know. I wrote their answers according to the pronunciation. The squaws of our lodge gave me words purposely, not easily articulated or written; my attempts at correct enunciation were greeted with lively sallies of laughter. Our conversation was carried on in broken, very broken, sentences; and, I must say, the part

that they too ably sustained, was not of the most refined character. No white person so young as myself had ever visited the Cheyennes, and the gentle fair seemed glad to meet one divested of the trader's assumed consequence.

The visits of the Indians were divided between Mr. Bent's lodge and our own, but we saw as many as we wished, for our coffee and sugar cost us a dollar a pound. To secure the good will and robes of the sensitive men, we had to offer our dear-bought Java at meal time—the period of the greatest congregation. Still, their company was acceptable, as their manners, conversation, and pipes, were agreeable.

So complete and comprehensive is their mode of communication by signs, that they can understand each other without a word being said, and with more facility than with the lips.

I had a small box, in which were shirts, tobacco, a backgammon board, and a few books; one of them from Harper's series of the Family Library, on the heavenly bodies. The plates were incomprehensible to the natives; and, with all my efforts, I could but imperfectly make myself understood, even on most commonplace matters. Some of the chiefs, having seen this book, would not be put off without an answer to their queries; and it brought all my ingenuity into play, to make suitable similes between the plates and things within their knowledge; consequently, great perversion of Dick's celestial geography took place.

A chief, named Mah-ke-o-nih, or the "Big Wolf," professedly took a great liking to me. We went, by his invitation, one day, to a feast, guided by his youngest son, where we found Mah-ke-o-nih, in a small lodge. After the customary salutations, we sat down to a bowl of dried stewed pumpkin, with a

horn spoon sticking in it, from which we partook by turns. The spoon was a curiosity in its way—manufactured from the horn of a Rocky Mountain sheep, and holding, at least, a pint. The childish hint, "Take a spoon, pig," would not help the matter much, if this kind was in use.

The meaning of *feast* (a term much in vogue with the traders), is anything set before one, by invitation, to be much or little, rare or common.

Mah-ke-o-nih was in mourning for the loss of a near relative; and, to show the outward customary signs of grief, he lived in a small lodge. He is now old, but in younger days the name of Mah-ke-o-nih was well known as that of a brave; and, in later years, as a fearless warrior of unspotted fame. Now he is honored and respected for his Indian virtues.

I gave him a bent piece of hickory, from an ox yoke, with which to make a bow. As hard wood is scarce, and, as the chief knew that I had been offered, several times, a robe for it, he was much pleased by my preference; and, in return, gave me his title. After this circumstance I was known among the Cheyennes as Mah-ke-o-nih—sometimes as Veheo-kiss, or the "young white man."

In this village were more than a hundred dogs—from the large half-wolf, down to the smallest specimen. Often, during the night, they broke forth in a prolonged howl, with the accompanying music of hundreds of prowling wolves, making a most dissonant, unearthly noice. And such a fuss! Every one ceased talking until the Voices of the Night were hushed. In our lodge were three huge curs and four cross feists; and, whenever the signal for a general bewailing was given, by some superannuated mother of many canine generations, out, pellmell, tore our

loud-mouthed curs, and the snarling squaw pets, to join the doggish revelry.

The love of gaming seems inherent in our very natures; as a proof of this, it was ever a favorite amusement with the Cheyenne and other Indians, long ere they became acquainted with the whites. Their game, however, is simple, though not the less injurious in its effects. It is played by the young men and women; who, sitting in a circle, and with a rocking to-and-fro motion of the body, accompanied by a low, quick chant, increased in vigor as the game progresses, hold a bit of wood, cherrystone, or any thing small in the hand; and, after a series of dexterous shiftings, so as to deceive, hold them out, while the singing stops for the players to bet in which hand is the stone. So soon as they say, the object is shown; the fortunate ones sweep the stakes; the stone is given to the next, in order of rotation, the chant again strikes up—other trinkets are put up, and the betting recommences. They laugh and get much excited over their primitive game; and, often, an unlucky maiden rises from her amusement without the numerous bracelets, rings, and beads, with which she came gayly decked to the meeting lodge.

This morning was one of November's most genial days. About ten o'clock, I walked out and sat on a dry cottonwood log, to admire the rural and domestic scene. The grass was green in many places—the majestic cottonwoods, not yet entirely robbed of their foliage, upreared their imposing trunks, while the branches gravefully overhung the clean, wind-swept grass.

The yellow, cone-shaped lodges looked like so many pyramids. Near them were industrious squaws, bringing, by dint of constant exertion, buffalo skins down to the required thinness, by means of the dub-

ber; which, as it struck the hard and dry robe, sounded like the escapement of steam from a small pipe. The valley was partly locked in by a low range of hills, on whose sides numerous bands of gay-colored horses were luxuriating on the fine, nutritious verdure. Around the lodges troops of boys were shooting at marks, with bow and arrow, or tumbling on the grass in childish sport. Dignified chiefs walked with stately step and erect heads, to grave council or taciturn smoke.

I sat long—collecting and embodying the thoughts and actions of the past four months, summing up the whole, with a glance at my then present situation. My companions were rough men—used to the hardships of a mountaineer's life—whose manners are blunt, and whose speech is rude—men driven to the western wilds, with embittered feelings—with better natures shattered—with hopes blasted—to seek, in the dangers of the warpath, fierce excitement and banishment of care. The winter snow wreaths drift over them unheeded, and the nightwind, howling around their lonely camp, is heard with calm indifference. Yet these aliens from society, these strangers to the refinements of civilized life, who will tear off a bloody scalp with even grim smiles of satisfaction, are fine fellows, full of fun, and often kind and obliging.

John Smith was a modified specimen of this character. Ten years before, he left his employer, a tailor, and ran off from St. Louis, with a party of traders for the mountains; and so enamored was he with the desultory and exciting life, that he chose rather to sit cross-legged, smoking the long Indian pipe, than to cross his legs on his master's board.

He first remained a winter with the Blackfeet[1]; but, running too great a risk of "losing his hair" (scalp), at the hands of the impetuous, coup[2]-anxious braves he sojourned awhile with the more friendly Sioux; and subsequently, wended his way, while pursuing the trail of a horse-stealing band of Arapahoes[3], to the headwaters of the Arkansas; and, in the quiet nooks and warm savannas of the *Bayou Salade*,[4] took up his abode and a squaw, with the Cheyennes, with whom he has ever since remained. At times he lived as they did, with lodge, and horses, running buffalo, and depending on it, as did his new-found friends. entirely for subsistence; dressing robes for the trade; taking part in the council; looked up to as a chief, and exercising much authority. He became such an adept in the knowledge of the Cheyenne tongue, and such a favorite with the tribe, that his services as trader were now quite invaluable to his employers. Possessed of a retentive memory, he still spoke the dialects of the three nations just named; and, in addition, French like a native, Spanish very well, and his mother tongue. Though subject to privations of a severe nature, he thought it "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven," and nothing could persuade him to lead a different life.

---

[1]*Blackfeet*—A tribe of Algonkin stock, ranging just east of the Rocky Mountains in northern Montana and Canada.

[2]*Coup*—French term used by the Indians to refer to a brave deed, feat of arms, or the honor attaching to such deed; specifically, to strike or touch an enemy, living, wounded, or recently dead, in battle. Four men might count *coup* on the same foe. (pronounced Coo.)

[3]*Arapahoes*—A small tribe of Algonkin stock, allied with the Cheyennes, ranging east of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado and Southern Wyoming.

[4]*Bayou Salade*—now known as South Park, Colorado, in Park County, north and west of Pike's Peak. A favorite hunting ground of the frontiersmen, especially in winter.

The New Mexicans often came in small parties to his Indian village; their mules packed with dried pumpkin, corn, etc., to trade for robes and meat; and Smith, who knew his power, exacted tribute, which always was paid. One party, however, refusing, Smith harangued the village, and calling the young men together, they resolutely proceeded to the party of cowering Mexicans; and, emptying every sack on the ground, called the women and children to help themselves, which summons was obeyed with alacrity. The poor *pelados* left for *El valle de Taos*,[1] poorer, by far, than when they came; uttering thanks to Heaven for the retention of their scalps. This, and other aggravated cases, so intimidated the New Mexicans, and impressed them so deeply with a sense of Smith's supreme potency, that ever after, his permission to trade was humbly craved, by a special deputation of the parties, accompanied by peace offerings of corn, pumpkin, and *pinole*.[2]

Once, as he was journeying by himself, a day's ride from the village, he was met by forty or more corn traders; who, instead of putting speedily out of the way such a bane to their prospects, gravely asked him if they could proceed; and offered him every third robe (a large percentage), to accompany and protect them, which he did. For the proceeds of his three days' protection, he received more than two hundred dollars. Indeed, he became so independent, and so regardless of justice, in his condescension toward the *Carahos*,[3] that the Governor of

---

[1]*El Valle de Taos*—the valley in which stands the Pueblo and the Mexican town of San Fernando de Taos, the favorite town of the trappers. In Taos County, New Mexico.

[2]*Pinole*—corn meal.

[3]*Carahos*—Spanish term, applied in derision to the Mexicans.

New Mexico offered five hundred dollars for him, dead or alive: but, so afraid were the Mexicans of the Cheyennes, that his capture was never attempted.

Smith was strange in some respects; his peculiar adaptation to surrounding circumstances, and perceptive faculties, enabled him to pick up a little knowledge of everything, and to show it off much to his own credit—an unaccountable composition of goodness and evil, cleverness and meanness, caution and recklessness. I used to look at him with astonishment, and wonder if he was not the devil incognito. He and I often sang hymns, and a look, more sanctimonious, meek, at-peace-with-mankind than in his countenance could nowhere be found. At other times, he *sacre*-ed in French, *caraho*-ed in Spanish-Mexican, interpolated with *Thunder strike you* in Cheyenne, or, at others, he genuinely and emphatically *damned* in American.

I had a backgammon board, brought from St. Louis. Smith kept the squaws of the lodge "chunking" up the fire, to give light for us; and "deuce ace," "double sixes," were, probably for the first time, heard in the Cheyenne village. We played for hours, interrupted occasionally by a squaw with a robe to trade; then having attended to her wants, we would resume the board. The Indians laughed at us, saying *"ten-o-wast?"*—What is it?—which we explained to the best of our ability. My books, backgammon board, paper and pencil, were great novelties to the savages, who would attentively examine them, look at me, shake their heads, and, after a sober pause, and sometimes with a puzzled expression of features, exclaim, *"Mah-ke-o-nih-ma-son-ne,"* "Big Wolf's foolish." So it was! everything beyond their comprehension, was *ma-son-ne.*

Smith's voice was capable of some little harmon-

ious modulation, and we used to sing, "The Days When We Went Gipsying," "The Mellow Horn," "The Minstrel's Returned from the War," and other antiquated melodies, interspersed with hymns, and our own crude airs and compositions, making the lodge resound, to the infinite amusement of the squaws and children, and sometimes calling forth contemptuous "*Ve-heo mah-son-nes* (white men are fools)" from the ridiculously solemn old men. Frequently, when executing a song in our very best manner, the village dogs chimed in with their original and touching music, forcing us to acknowledge ourselves beaten, in fair fight, and to withdraw, leaving them undisputed masters of the field; our only consolation was in the idea that they, being Indian dogs, were incapable of appreciating our efforts.

The Cheyennes have quite a variety of dishes, some hard to stomach, others quite palatable. Among them, a favorite is of wild cherries, gathered in the mountains, in the summer, and pounded (stone and all) to a jelly, which, when dried, is put away for the winter, when the buffalo marrow is good—the time for a reunion of the small bands, to trade, feast, smoke, and deliberate. These cherries, incorporated by much manipulation, at the hands of the not particularly clean matrons, with marrow and pounded meat, and patted in balls, form a principal portion of the feasts.

A buffalo skin is quite thick. To make it pliable it is stretched to its utmost, on the ground (the hair side down) by means of wooden pegs, as soon as it is brought in from a hunt. When it dries, the squaws take the adze-shaped instrument, fitted to the angle of an elk's horn, which has before been described, and, with repeated blows, chip off small shavings of the raw hide, until it has the requisite

thinness. The shavings are carefully preserved, and, when a very nice feast is wished, these "chips" are put into a wooden bowl, and boiling water poured over them, which cooks and reduces the whole to a pulpy mass immediately. This dish tastes similar to boiled Irish potatoes—to which, by the addition of cherries, a fancy flavor is added.

The fungus growing on the sides of decaying logs is gathered by the squaws, and boiled with meat, for several hours; on tasting the poisonous stuff, as I previously supposed it to be, my thoughts instantaneously traveled to Galveston bay and its fine oysters. It was first rate, but the appetite soon cloys.

A root growing in the bottoms is much eaten, raw or cooked. It partakes of the flavor of both the potato and the Jerusalem artichoke.

Before most of the lodges are three sticks, about seven feet in length and an inch in diameter, fastened at the top, and the lower ends brought out, so that it stands alone. On this is hung the shield, and a small square bag of "par fleche," containing pipes, with an accompanying pendant roll of stems, carefully wrapped in blue or red cloth, and decorated with the beads and porcupine quills. This collection is held in great veneration, for the pipe is their only religion. Through its agency, they invoke the Great Spirit; through it they render homage to the winds, to the earth, and to the sky.

Every one has his peculiar notion on this subject; and, in passing the pipe, one must have it presented stem downward, others, the reverse; some with the bowl resting on the ground; and, as this is a matter of great solemnity, their several fancies are respected. Sometimes I required them to hand it to me, when smoking, in imitation of their custom; on this, a

faint smile, half mingled with respect and pity for my folly, in tampering with their sacred ceremony, would appear on their faces, and, with a slow negative shake of the head, they would ejaculate, "*Stomet-mah-son-ne, wah-hein*—Pshaw, that's foolish: don't do so."

It seems strange that these people remain the same untutored, blood-thirsty savages as ever; and so untamable are their natures, that contact with missionaries and white men, make them only the greater demons—to remain here, as wild, almost, as their favorite buffalo, with no settled purpose; for no apparent good; with no cares but those of providing for themselves and families in the savage way—their fine forms, their intelligent (in spite of their mental darkness) countenances, and noble eyes, used for no intellectual purpose, or, in any way for the advancement of religion or science. And, it appears that all Christian efforts, with extremely few exceptions, instead of humanizing and rendering their homes peaceful and themselves industrious, are so much waste of valuable lives and time.

Religion[1] they (the Cheyennes) have none, if, indeed, we except the respect paid to the pipe; nor do we see any signs or vestiges of spiritual worship; but, one remarkable thing—in offering the pipe, before every fresh filling, to the sky, the earth, and the winds, the motion made in so doing, describes the form of a cross;[2] and, in blowing the first four whiffs, the smoke is invariably sent the same four direc-

---

[1]*Religion*—A mistake. The Cheyennes were as religious as other Plains tribes, worshipped a Supreme Being, believed in a future life, and were given to many rituals and ceremonies. See Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, Vol. II, page 87.

[2]*Cross*—the Cheyenne cross had reference to the four cardinal points of the compass and to the number four,

tions. It is, undoubtedly, void of meaning, and unintentional in reference to Christian worship; yet, it is a superstition, founded on ancient tradition. This tribe once lived near the headwaters of the Mississippi; and, as the early Jesuit missionaries were such energetic zealots, in the diffusion of their religious sentiments, probably to make faith more acceptable to the Indians, the Roman Catholic rites were blended with the homage shown to the pipe, which custom of offering, in the form of a cross, is still retained by them; but, as every custom is handed down by tradition merely, the true source has been forgotten. My inquiries were unsatisfactorily answered, owing to want of power to express myself fully; had a reason been assigned, no reliance could have been put in it. The inquiring mind is naturally restless to think that no light can be thrown on their origin and early customs, nor the question settled whether they are the descendants of that race or races, by whom the immense tumuli and fortifications were erected throughout the continent; or, if they are the progeny of the Aztecs and Peruvians, whose advancement in civilization was so astonishing to the Spanish navigators. But the present Indians are totally ignorant of the most common inventions—a woefully degenerate set, in truth, if they are so descended.

---

their sacred number. It was not derived from the teaching of Christian missionaries.

CHAPTER V

Old Fort Bent

On the 29th of November a party of Mexicans came near camp, with their *mulada*[1] freighted with corn, beans, etc., to trade for meat and robes. To Smith, the messenger was quite polite. *"Señor, si Señor—Sir, yes Sir"*—was prefixed or affixed to their answers to our most trivial questions. They were too polite. As they knew Smith by reputation, if not by sight, he was offered whatever he wished—*"a suy-disposicion*—the whole is at your service," but he took only that for which he paid in trade a good price. I pitied the poor fellows, though they had no cause for fear; and, after a speedy exchange of commodities for meat and robes, their swarthy faces were turned toward Las Cumbres Españolas, whose snowy crests could dimly be seen struggling through the fleeting clouds, afar off to the Northwest (Southwest).

This side (the west)[2] of the river, and a hundred miles down from Bent's Fort, is considered, by men who have lived in the country for years (the late maps to the contrary), as New Mexican territory. Undoubtedly, our camp was in *Nueva Mejico.* Occasionally we saw government trains on the opposite side of the river, trailing slowly along, but we did not wish to hail them.

We were a long time without bread, but while we had buffalo's fat, we cared or thought little of anything more—better living there could not be. The

---

[1]*Mulada*—(Spanish-American) drove of mules.

[2]*Northwest, west*—These directions are wrong. The river here flows east, and the Spanish Peaks are to the southwest.

weather was pleasant toward the middle of the day, and at night the lodge-fire and pipe contributed, by their genial influence, to make us more than contented to sit cross-legged, on warm robes, listening to the traders' yarns—(there were several now with us).

William Bent, one evening, wished someone to go to the Fort. I proposed to oblige him, and in the morning, saddling Paint, I was off. A still wind, fresh from Pike's Peak, caused me to pull up the collar of my blue blanket overcoat, and wrap the pliant buffalo robe around my chilled legs. The Fort was thirty to forty miles distant;[1] and, when I clutched more firmly my rifle, as it lay between the saddle pommel and my body, I wanted sincerely to turn back. Chagrined, and biting my blue lips with vexation, at the last night's rash proposition, I urged Paint in a lope.

In going down a declivity I espied a horseman in advance; so, putting on a fresh waterproof cap, I spurred up unwilling Paint, until within five or six yards of the man, who knew not my approach. Seeing, before nearing him, that he was a Mexican, I took the precaution to turn the muzzle of my rifle toward him, so that, in a case of a hostile demonstration on his part, my gun could be fired in the smallest possible time.

"Hello, Señor," shouted I at the top of my voice, "where are you going?"

"*Valgame Dios!*" exclaimed he, as he quickly turned his head, much startled at the unexpected sound. Perceiving that I was "white," he bowed his

---

[1]*Forty miles distant*—Bent's camp must have been near the site where he later built Bent's New Fort, where Old Fort Lyon was established in 1860.

uncovered head, with a respectful *"Buenos le dai, Señor"*—"Good day, Sir."

A response, from me of *"Gracias, muy buen"*—"Thank you, very well," was the sum total of our intelligible conversation. He then talked and pointed awhile, and away he galloped through the bottom, while I kept the direct course. My heart felt lighter when he left; he glad to get away; I more than happy; though I had apprehensions he would lie in wait with his *compadres*, who I knew were in the neighborhood; and, as my horse and rifle were of the best, they would likely not have many intervening scruples as to the propriety of sending an arrow through my coat.

The ground was sparsely covered with grass, and the high wind blew the sand and gravel furiously, blinding both Paint and his rider; but we persevered, sideways and backward, for three or more hours—I trying to see the expected Mexicans through the struggle, until overtaking a United States ox-train, with which I traveled and stayed all night.

The teams were unyoked, wood was gathered, and soon smoke was rising from the different mess-fires. The laugh and oath were mingled with the hungry voices of the men—so different from the quiet, dreamy village. The captain gave me a cup of coffee, and bread, and bacon, at his mess—the two last-named articles great rarities of late. I cut cottonwood limbs from a tree, and threw down before Paint, tied up to a wagonwheel, for him to peel for food. I accepted a sleeping place in the captain's wagon.

The first snow clothed the ground with its chilling drapery. When we arose, shivering with cold, we kindled fires, and boiled the coffee. Paint had

gnawed off the cottonwood bark quite clean. It affords considerable nourishment, and is often given to animals in the spring, when the old grass is rotten and the new not yet fit for use, or in deep snows, when grass cannot be reached. Too much of it causes the hair to come out, sometimes leaving the animals quite bare, though it renders them "seal fat."

Thanking Captain Fowler for his kindness, I soon was facing the same winds as yesterday—my course pointing to Pike's Peak; and in an hour's ride *Las Cumbres Españolas.* Near the mouth of the Purgatoire, a deer stopped, with his head turned to look at me, until I was within sixty yards; but my horse, disposed to act foolishly, snorted as I raised my rifle, and away the buck bounded out of sight. Paint traveled pretty fast for an hour or so.

The country in the Fort vicinity assumed a bleak appearance; the short grass concealed the cold ground, and the white chalk bluffs, the leafless trees, and the chill air made me feel lonely. The Fort mud walls were abominably cheerless. Near by were some men digging a grave.

My own unenviable thoughts occupied me through the solitary day; and, only when Paint was turned in the corral, behind the Fort, to chew dry hay, and myself with numbed fingers, gradually thawing in the long, low dining room, drinking hot coffee, eating bread, buffler, and "State doin's," and listening to Charlotte, the glib-tongued, sable Fort cook, retailing her stock of news and surmises, did I feel entirely free to throw off care. Shortly following, did I sit by the bright woodfire, in the clerk's office, in a *dolce far niente* state, puffing a Mexican shuck cigarillo, wondering when originated the soothing luxury, until the combined effects of dinner, tobacco,

and great change from cold to warmth, threw me in a doze, from which I was awaked at dusk.

Mr. Holt, the storekeeper, and I, selected the goods and other articles—the object of my mission—in time for supper.

Captain Enos, Assistant Quartermaster, and his clerk, Dyer, Doctor Hempstead, Mr. Holt, the carpenter, blacksmith, and a few Fort and Government employees, constituted the quality and quantity of the male inmates. Rosalie, a half-breed French and Indian squaw (the wife of Ed the carpenter), and Charlotte, the culinary divinity, were, as a Missouri teamster remarked, "the only female women here." They nightly were led to the floor "to trip the light fantastic toe," swung rudely and gently in the mazes of the country dance—but such a medley of steps is seldom seen out of the mountains—the halting, irregular march of the war dance; the slipping gallopade, the boisterous pitching of the Missouri backwoodsman, and the more nice gyrations of the Frenchman—for all, irrespective of rank, age, and color, went pellmell into the excitement, in a manner that would have rendered a leveler of aristocracies and select companies frantic with delight. It was a most complete democratic demonstration. And then the airs assumed by the fair ones—more particularly Charlotte, who took pattern from real life in the "States"; she acted her part to perfection. The grand center of attraction, the belle of the evening, she treated the suitors for the "pleasure of the next set" with becoming ease and sauvity of manner. She knew her worth, and managed accordingly; and, when the favored gallant stood by her side, waiting for the rudely-scraped tune from a screaking violin, satisfaction, joy, and triumph over his rivals, were pictured on his radiant face.

Doctor Hempstead, however, did not join the festive throng; and his well-stocked library afforded recreation and pastime during the dull intervals of the day.

I met McIlvaine, from the capital of my own State,[1] and with him, many agreeable reminiscences were gone over. He was in charge of a provision train, and I noticed his command were under better discipline than is usual on the prairie, with United States employees.

In the following afternoon, Greenwood, Jean Batiste—a Canadian—and myself, left for the village, with a laden cart of goods. I never had seen these men before, but, as the heavy, slow-spoken Francaise remarked—"*Il est tout le meme chose ici,* (it is all the same here)" and, together with shooting at whining coyotes, talking, and the reproving *sacre'* to the stubborn tandem cart mules, we fixed ourselves in good time near to a heap of logs, which an improvident party of teamsters had collected, set on fire, and left to burn.

The animals were well hobbled, for we knew their failing—that of straying afar, in a spirit of restlessness, and trouble-giving. Paint—the old coon—waited impatiently for the rawhide strap to be securely fastened, and, at the first forward lunge, he knowingly turned his white eye to me.

The foibles and virtues of mutual acquaintances in St. Louis were freely descanted upon, during the discussion of some cigars, found, unexpectedly, among my "possibles" at the Fort, as we crossed our legs on the ground that night before the cottonwood logs. Our taciturn *compañero* looked at the hot coals for hours, without joining in the "talk"—with

---

[1]*Ohio*—McIlvaine was a lieutenant in the U. S. Army.

not a muscle of his face relaxed from the same meaningless rigidity into which they had stiffened at first —it would be hard to tell of what he thought—and, but for the vacillating puff, puff, from his thick lips, and short pipestem, one would have supposed him asleep. On the offer of a cigar, he replied, with a feeling stress on the first word, without turning his head, as he gave a trial puff for fire—*"Sacre', mon pipe est bon, certainment!"*[1]

Early, Jean Batiste was out for the "cavayard," while Greenwood and I prepared something to eat. Waiting two hours in dread of the proximity of the horse-loving Comanche, or straggling Pawnee, we descried the animals with heads to camp, and Jean at their heels.

A hobble is a strip of soft buckskin, or thin *par fleche,* twenty or twenty-five inches in length, fastened to the mule's forelegs, so that both forefeet have to be raised at once in walking; the labor attendant on the exertion generally prevents their straying far.

By five o'clock, we were at the lower end of Tharpe's bottom, where a United States train was corralling. Buchanan, who, in the pride of wagon-mastership, directed and superintended, invited us to supper, while our animals grazed unsaddled. A pipe and short talk ensued, and we resumed the trace. By ten o'clock, the baying of the village dogs was distinctly heard across the river. After an hour's wandering in the tangled bottom, Vip-po-nah welcomed us.

The village was in an uproar. The "opposition traders," a mile above, had conferred a present of liquor on several chiefs, who, in turn, disposed to

---

[1] "Pshaw, my pipe is good enough, certainly."

their friends, and all were making "the night hideous," in honor of the "rosy god"; for they have songs adapted to their orgies, more noisy and fierce than which, none exist. No serious injury resulted from the revel. We saw nothing of the devotees except two squaws, in the morning, who tumbled like wounded "bufflers," into our lodge, pitching on Greenwood, Jean, and me, waking us from our recuperating slumbers. They fell weeping, in drunken seriousness, and the next moment, peals of laughter issued from the mouths, whence, but an instant before the blubbering accents of grief had proceeded.

"*Sacre garces! tonnere! sa-a-cre garces!*" rattled out Jean, casting them off rudely with his muscular arm.

Greenwood swore and charged about until he was perfectly awake, but the importunate squaws clung to us.

"*Ten-o-wast? O-ne-a-vokst?* What do you want? beads or blankets? What is it?" asked I.

"*Wah-hein! ve-heo-kiss pow-wow nashit, ve-heo mah-pe*—Nothing. Young white man is very good —want whisky?"

"Oh, get out, you old hags," said Greenwood; "darn a fool squaw, anyhow; this coon hates 'em naterally, when they act so fool like."

We finally succeeded in making them vacate the premises, by dint of threats and persuasion, though sleep was chased effectually, for the time, from our eyelids. There are two objects most repugnant to my feelings—a drunken or an angry woman. She seems to descend from the position of a ministering angel down, down below any scale of degradation conceivable; and imprints such a hideous image of contorted passion, which, notwithstanding the sub-

sequent blandishments of grace and smiles, can never be effaced from the memory.

We began to trade briskly in robes—owing to the cold weather, plenty of buffalo, and liquor, which last seemed to open the Indians' hearts—causing us to drop the backgammon board often to serve the precise savages, who would look at and handle a blanket, or other commodity, an hour, before concluding a bargain. We would have to praise, and feel, and talk of the article in question, and seal the trade, by passing the long pipe, as a balm to their fastidious tastes.

One evening we were in our places—I was lying on a pile of outspread robes, watching the blaze, as it illumined the lodge, which gave the yellow hue of the skins of which it was made, a still brighter tinge; and, following with my eye the thin blue smoke, coursing, in fantastic shapes, through the opening at the top of the cone; my thought carrying me momentarily everywhere; now home; now enjoying some choice edible, or, seated by a pleasant friend, conversing; in short, my mind was like the harp in Dryden's "Alexander's Feast," the chords of which, touched by the magic hand of memory, or flight of fancy, alternately depressed, or elevated me in feeling. Greenwood and Smith, sitting up, held in "durance vile" the ever-present pipe. Their unusual laughter attracted my attention, but, not divining the cause, I joined in the conversation. It was now quite late, and feeling hungry, I asked what was on the fire.

"Terrapins!" promptly replied Smith.

"Terrapins?" echoed I, in surprise, at the name. "Terrapins! how do they cook them?"

"You know them hard-shell land terrapin?"

"Yes."

"Well! the squaws go out to the sand buttes, and bring the critters in, and cook 'em in the shell alive —those stewin' thar are cleaned first. Howsomever, they're darned good!"

"Yes, hos, an' that's a fact, wagh!" chimed in Greenwood.

I listened, of course, with much interest to their account of the savage dish, and waited, with impatience, for a taste of that, the recital of whose merits sharpened my already keen appetite. When the squaw transferred the contents of the kettle to a wooden bowl, and passed it to us, our butcher knives were in immediate requisition. Taking a piece, with hungry avidity, which Smith handed me, without thought as to what part of the terrapin it was, I ate it with much gusto, calling for more. It was extremely good, and I spoke of the delicacy of the meat, and answered all their questions as to its excellency in the affirmative, even to the extent of a panegyric on the whole turtle species. After fully committing myself, Smith looked at me awhile in silence, the corners of his mouth gradually making preparations for a laugh, and asked:

"Well! hos! how do you like dogmeat?" and then such hearty guffaws were never heard. The stupefaction into which I was thrown by the revolting announcement, only increased their merriment, which soon was resolved into yells of delight at my discomfiture.

A revulsion of opinion, and dogmeat too, ensued, for I could feel the "pup" crawling up my throat; but saying to myself—"that it was good under the name of terrapin," that "a rose under any other name would smell as sweet," and that it would be prejudice to stop, I broke the shackles of deep-rooted antipathy to the canine breed, and, putting a choice

morceau on top of that already swallowed, ever after remained a stanch defender and admirer of dog-meat. The conversation held with Smith, the second day of our acquaintance, was brought to mind, and I acknowledged that dog was next in order to buffalo.

On the 7th of December, I left, with Smith, for the lower Indian village. His squaw, Wo-pe-kon-ne, (Jack), an Indian boy of twelve years, and Pierre, accompanied us. A single packmule carried our small stock of goods and provision. Smith had his band of five horses, and with two discarded lodge-poles, tied one on each side of a mule, and a basket fastened on a short distance behind the animal, he made an Indian dray, in which Jack was put when tired.

Indian squaws carry very young children on their backs, whether riding or walking. With a twist of the arms, like putting on a coat, the squaw places, or rather flings, the child around, and pulls its little arms about her neck; then, stooping forward, until her back is horizontal, she drops her hold of the child, who digs his fingers in her neck, or tugs away at the long braids of pendant hair; and, with a peculiar hunch or upward motion of the arms—the same a lady makes in putting a shawl on her shoulders, when it has fallen off the neck—the robe is drawn over him, the head only visible. It is a comfortable and desirable position—hence the total absence of one-sidedness, cross eyes, and many of the "ills that baby flesh is heir to," through neglect or carelessness of nurses.

We crossed Big Sand Creek, and camped, for the night, on what would be an island in high water, and made a cheerful fire of driftwood, leaving the animals well hobbled in good grass. The cold air,

after coffee and tobacco were duly disposed, sent us to bed early.

Jack took a crying fit while under way. His mother tried to quiet him gently; Smith impatiently endured the fuss for a half hour; but Jack, keeping it up, was taken from his mother, who looked daggers askance at her unfeeling lord, and jammed into the "dray," where he blubbered, unheeded, for two hours.

Toward sundown we looked for the village; and, when in the Salt Bottom, a number of lodges, far away to the right, were espied, the river intervening, the edges of which were so hard frozen that the animals could scarcely be urged in. We experienced the same trouble in the high weeds and trees, emerging into open space not ten yards from a lodge. Smith, fearing that we had stumbled on an Arapaho instead of a Cheyenne village, spoke in a low tone—

"Pull the wipingsticks from your guns; we may have to fight!"

"Sacre, dis is von very dam bad *affaire—mais* here is *mon couteau pour les diables,"* replied Piérre, loosening his knife in its scabbard, and twitching around the belt.

We kept on, much elated. The first man who showed himself, caused Smith to turn aside his head and whisper, "Coho! the most infernal and mean of the tribe—the leader of the worst band in the mountains."

Notwithstanding the gloomy aspect, we rode up and offered our hands to Coho, and asked for Warratoria—a chief more friendly than otherwise. We broke for the largest lodge; and, giving our horses into the hands of Piérre and the squaw, entered that which proved to be Beardy's, a prominent chief,

who, though not on cordial terms with the whites, was not so bad as Coho.

Beardy and others smoked with us, and after a present of tobacco, we left, contrary to their request and desire, under the plea of wishing to reach the Cheyenne village that night; still holding ourselves in readiness for a "brush," determined to save at least one scalp apiece before our own hair should go. I kept my horse in motion, looking back for charging Arapahoes; and, before I was aware, we plunged in a rush-swamp, so deep I was obliged to dismount and wade through water over my knees, while Paint floundered to the other side, severely straining himself.

We met Indians galloping; who, contrary to custom, did not stop to shake hands, which unequivocal symptom of hostility increased the probability of danger; but we were not molested, and we took care to put a long distance between them and us before night.

On dismounting, my feet were too much frozen to walk, but Smith, by shouting to me to make myself useful, restored the circulation.

Just as the fire was kindled, Long Lade, one of the Company's traders, with a wagon and one man drove up. His fine face, strongly marked with the characteristic high cheek bones and broad underjaw, proclaimed him to be of a northern tribe. He has been a trader for many years, and like many of the Far Westerners, he is still poor. Now, in his old age, he has nothing on which to depend for a livelihood but his salary. He speaks French well (he is a half-breed Canadian-French and Indian), and American but imperfectly. From the first time I met the old man, the more tender chords of my heart were touched with sympathy and respect for him.

He seemed so lonely, fast growing old, with a few gray hairs struggling through the straight, jetty locks—alone and poor. I have often wondered what has befallen him—he was so sad a picture of taciturn solitude.

Early we separated—Long Lade, with two pack mules and Piérre for the upper village, we with his wagon and Mexican for the lower, which was reached by ten o'clock, where we pulled off our saddles in front of Se-ne-mone's, or Tobacco's, lodge. Our host was afflicted with sore eyes; but we were welcomed to the "back part," in true feeling of hospitality.

CHEYENNE WARRIORS

CHAPTER VI

The Scalp Dance

Four inches of snow greeted our sight on awaking. The wind was cold and furious; but, by the next noon, tranquility and sunlight were restored.

Toward the middle of the day, the village was in a great bustle. Every squaw, child, and man, had his face blacked,[1] which is a manifestation of joy. Pellmell they went, men, squaws, and dogs, into the icy river. Some hastily jerked off their leggins, and held moccasins and dresses high out of the water. Others, too impatient, dashed the stream from beneath their impetuous feet, scarce taking time to draw more closely the always-worn robe. Wondering what caused all this commotion, and looking over the river, whither the yelling, half-frantic savages were so speedily hurrying, we saw a band of Indians advancing toward us. As the foremost braves reined their champing barbs on the river bank, mingled whoops of triumph and delight, and the repeated discharges of fusils, filled the air. In the hands of three, were slender willow wands, from the smaller points of which dangled as many scalps—the single tuft of hair on each pronouncing them Pawnee. They were raised aloft, amid the unrestrained bursts of joy from the thrice happy, blood-thirsty throng. Children ran to meet their fathers, sisters their brothers, girls their lovers, returned from the scene of victorious strife; decrepit matrons welcomed manly sons; and aged chiefs their boys and braves. It was a

---

[1]*Face blacked*—Black paint was used by victorious warriors and their relatives. Ordinarily, the Cheyennes painted their faces red for good luck and as a protection from the weather.

scene of affection, and a proud day in the Cheyenne annals of prowess. The members of the small, but gallant band were relieved of their shields and lances, by tender-hearted squaws, and accompanied to their respective homes, to repose by the lodge fire, consume choice meat, and to be the heroes of the family circle.

Se-ne-mone's son was fortunate enough to take a scalp, which was hung above us; the half-blind father, in parental pride, centered his fond gaze on the features of his son, who, in battle hard-won, emblazoned the Se-ne-mone escutcheon with honorable and fresh devices, as in the days of his own prime.

The drum, at night, sent forth its monotony of hollow sound. Our Mexican, Pedro, and I, directed by the booming, entered a lodge vacated for the purpose, now full of young men and squaws, following one another in a continuous circle. They kept the left knee stiff, and bending the right with a half-forward, half-negative step, as if they wanted to go on and could not, accompanied it, every time the right foot was raised, with an energetic, broken song, which, dying away, was again and again sounded, "*Hay-a-hay, hay-a-hay,*" they went, laying the emphasis on the first syllable. A drum, similar to, though larger than, a tambourine, covered with *par fleche*, was beat upon with a stick, producing, with the voices, a sound not altogether disagreeable.

Throughout the entire night and succeeding day, the voices of the singers and the heavy notes of the drum reached us, and, at night, again the same dull sound lulled me to sleep. At first, Smith, to whom the ceremonies were no new occurrence, muttered, as he turned in his robes, curses at the "infernal noise." Before daylight, our lodge was filled with ceaseless dancers, and the drum and voices, so unpleasing to

our wearied ears, were giving us the full benefit of their compass. Smith, whose policy it was not to be offended, bore the infliction as he best could, and I looked on, much amused. The lodge was so full that they stood, without dancing, in a circle round the fire, and, with a swaying motion of the body, kept time to their music.

During the day, the young men, except the dancers, piled up dry logs in a level, open space near, for a grand demonstration. At night, when it was fired, I folded my blanket over my shoulders, *comme les sauvages,* (like the savages), and went out. The faces of many girls were brilliant with vermilion; others were blacked, their robes, leggins, and skin-dresses glittering with beads and porcupine quill-work. Rings and bracelets of shining brass encircled their tapered arms and fingers, and shells dangled from their ears. Indeed, all the finery collectible was piled on in barbarous profusion, though a few, in good taste, or through poverty, wore a single band, and but few rings; and with jetty hair, parted in the middle from the forehead to the neck, terminating in two handsome braids.

The young men who can afford the expense, trade for dollars and silver coin of less denomination—coin as currency is not known among them—which they flatten thin, and fasten to a braid of buffalo hair, attached to the crownlock, and which, hanging behind, outside of the robe, adds much to the handsome appearance of the wearer.

The girls, numbering two hundred, fell into line together, and the men, of whom there were two hundred and fifty, joined; a circle was formed, which travelled around with the same shuffling step already described. The drummers and other musicians (twenty, or twenty-five of them) marched in

a contrary direction to and from and around the fire, inside the large ring; for, at the distance kept by the outsiders, the area was one hundred and fifty feet in diameter. These Apollonian emulators chanted the great deeds performed by the Cheyenne warriors; as they ended, the dying strain was caught up by the hundreds of the outside circle, who, in fast-swelling, loud tones, poured out the burthen of their song. At this juncture, the march was quickened, the scalps of the slain were borne aloft and shaken in wild delight, and shrill war notes, rising above the furious din, accelerated the pulsation, and strung high the nerves. Time-worn shields, carreering in mad holders' hands, clashed, and keen lances, once reeking in Pawnee blood, clanged. Braves seized one another with an iron grip, in the heat of excitement, or chimed more tenderly in the chant, enveloped in the same robe with some gentle maiden, as they approvingly stepped through one of their own original polkas.

Thirty of the chiefs and principal men were ranged by the pile of blazing logs. By their invitation, I sat down near Old Bark[1], and smoked death and its concomitant train of evils to those audacious tribes, who doubt the courage or supremacy of the brave, the great, and powerful Cheyenne nation.

The pipe was lavishly decorated with beaver strips, beads, and porcupine quills; the mixture of tobacco and bark was prepared with unusual care, for this, their grand gala night.

By this time, I had made the acquaintance of many young men and girls and often I chasse'd up to the scalps and joined in the chorus, much to their gratification and amusement, and no less to my own.

---

[1]*Old Bark*—Ugly Face, or Feathered Bear, a principal chief of the Cheyenne tribe.

Se-ne-mone's daughter, a clever girl of sixteen or seventeen winters, reveled in a flaming red cloth dress. She was quite a favorite of the beaux, and, consequently, her presence was sought for at all the festivities. But, sleepless nights, with continual dancing, fatiguing her, she, on one of these evenings, slipped from her friends to bed. Though it was not more than two hours after dark, we were all in our places, to all appearance asleep.

The Red Dress was hardly composed beneath her warm robe, before she heard the other girls, who had just missed her, coming; so up she sprang. In broke the girls with merry laughs. They all chimed in, and insisted on my accompanying them to dance. I refused, under the plea of fatigue. They pulled me to my feet, perforce. I still persisted in excusing myself; but, peering among the larger girls in front, who stood around the bed, the sweet, oval face of O-ne'-o, Sehak's daughter, shaded with an anxious cast of solicitude, decided the point at once. *"Ta-bin-ah"!* ("Come on"), said she, beckoning with her head to the drumming outside. What expressive eyes!—liquid and hazel, with a dash of playful humor, mild, beaming, and loving. Who could help being fascinated, magnetized, spirited away, but those imperious souls void of true feeling, or soured by adversity!—and, as for me, ever susceptible to genuine loveliness, 'twas nothing less than absolute enchantment; so slipping on my moccasins, and throwing a blanket around me, I followed her and companions, to charge through and over the jolting steps and uncertain halts of the grand scalp dance.

The Indian beaux are ridiculous personifications of vanity. With small looking glasses, vermillion-streaked faces, and decorated robes, or blankets, they perambulate the village, with looks of supreme self-

complacency. I often laughed heartily at their unique costumes, and self-satisfied looks. One of the dandies painted my face in the most approved Cheyenne style, but the squaws laughed so immoderately at the grotesque contrast of a white skin and red paint, I soon washed it off.

The trader is treated with much respect by the Indians, and is considered a chief—a great man. To retain this respect, he acts with as much dignity as the circumstances permit. Caring for none of the trader's assumed reservedness, I danced with the squaws, mixed in the gaieties, and, in every way, improved my time. It was more than probable I never would wish to trade with them; and why deprive myself of amusement? The squaws were astonished to find a white person so careless of dignity, though they liked me the better for it. With emotions of pleasure are recalled the happy hours passed with this nation—the bright faces of the girls—the pleasant, broad, good-humored countenance of the smiling Moon (O-ne-o, Missit's daughter), and the low chuckle of the young men, as they gained a triumph in the favorite game of "guess."

CHAPTER VII

Strangers and Drawbacks

A train of wagons passed on the 14th of December. Going out to it, I saw Buchanan, who had been sent, with others, to meet Captain Murphy, United States express, with a load of corn for his mules. They expected to find him about one hundred miles below. Buck was so pleased with my representations of savage attractions that he concluded to remain with us.

Our rifles, the backgammon board, and basking on the sunny-sheltered banks, amused us for two days. The Indians quite pleased Buck, who walked about, laughing at everything. His inquisitiveness, together with a red flannel shirt, attracted the squaws; who, naturally hilarious, were much diverted.

On the 18th, our eyes were regaled with a new phase in the dances. The squaws and men were dressed in different and more fantastic styles than ever. Some with the horns and skin of a buffalo attached to their own heads; others, with jackets of red and blue cloth, carried swords and lances. The horse, captured in the same fight for which we had been so festive for the preceding week or two, was brought in, and led around the ring, amid the noise of drums, waving of scalps, and dissonant yelling.

One great drawback to the pleasures of an Indian village is, that the inhabitants are troubled with a persecuting little animal—a roamer through the unbroken forests of hair on children's heads—now ascending the mountain of self-esteem, or reposing in the secluded vales around about combativeness. These creatures (the bugs), here, are white, and nearly the size of wheat grains. They do not confine their penetrating researches to the *caput* alone, but

traverse the immense surface of the whole body. By being in the same lodge with *les sauvages* continually, it was impossible to keep clear of the insects. Of course we came in for our share; but Buchanan, who wore a flannel shirt, was doubly visited.

We were sitting, one day, by the fire, with uncombed hair and unwashed faces (in the mood, physical and mental, to feel unpleasant), when Buck, who suspected not the true cause of his torment, said:

"I feel something biting, and darned bad, too; let's go and examine. I don't know what's the matter!"

"Biting you!" ejaculated Smith, "There's nothing so mighty queer in that when you're in the village, and," added he laughingly, "when that shirt and 'forfarraw'[1] of your'n comes off—Waugh!"

The sun shone out warm, so we went to the river, and undressed on a clean sand deposit, hid from the view of the village by intervening weeds; uninterrupted, save by an occasional squaw on an errand for water, with her bright brass kettle. Many families who do not wish to buy a bucket, or who cannot afford it, use a large buffalo intestine, one end of which is tied, filed with water, and hung to a lodge-pole, as it cannot stand on its own bottom. When a drink is wanted, the thirsty one puts his (or her) mouth to the opening at the top, and with hands on either side of the flabby bucket, compresses it, while the water flows into the mouth. But it always looked so dirty, I preferred waiting until reaching the river or our own lodge.

When Buck pulled off his flannel, he uttered an exclamation, coupled with an oath; which, to express on paper, with the proper force, would require more

---

[1]*Farfarraw*—trapper pronunciation of French *fanfaron*, here meaning something civilized, unnecessary, decorative.

italicization and more exclamation points than could be given. From the collar seams of his shirt, to those parallel to the body, the interstices were lined with ova, the germs of future tormentors, appearing as so many miniature pearls, reposing in the rich setting of red flannel. My clothing was similarly infested. As we passed the sentence of death, "Sampson and his jawbone" were brought to mind; but, according to my facetious *compañero*, the aforesaid "jawbone" was totally eclipsed by his thumbnails. What he said on this occasion need not be written. A swim in the icy element ensued, and dressing, we felt much better than before.

It would be superfluous in me to dilate on the changes effected in the way of empires, republics, arts, sciences, and religion, during the past eighteen hundred and forty-six years. All know these historical facts; and, as John Smith and myself are but heroes in our own small way, and as historians are so obtuse to a sense of justice, as to omit mentioning the hardy souls—the forerunners of civilization—who waste dear life among the savages, teaching them the pure English language (to say nothing of the robes we had to take from them), I shall have to be, to rescue our names from the depths of oblivion, narrator for both, to apprise everyone of our occupation and whereabouts on New Year's day.

While we, in this village, had neither mince pies, cakes, nor any of the good things consumed on like occasions, neither did we hear guns, shooting crackers, or cannon, or see shops gayly decorated; yet we had good buffalo meat, and aromatic coffee (without sugar or bread), which I enjoyed far more than anyone could enjoy a most tempting "State" dinner. For music, the village maidens chanted warsongs—the

harmonious strains of which fell on the ear far more pleasingly to me than Russel's best.

The village, in accordance with an almost invariable custom of the Indians, who undoubtedly have an eye for picturesque, rural beauty, was in a secluded, narrow bottom, overrun with long tangled and matted grass, quite close to the river, and sheltered by the hill in the background; dotted here and there with large cottonwoods, whose outspread limbs, gigantic and gnarled, gave an impression of majesty. A range —a snow-covered miniature Sierra Nevada—rising above a still lower range of coarse grass-covered hills; combined with the silver sheet of water far beyond, gleaming through the trees and the lodges, formed a camp remarkable at once for romantic loveliness, and for its excellent shelter for man and beast.

Buck rejoined the return party which he had so unceremoniously left to stay with us. He was a jovial, open-hearted fellow, and had such an insinuating manner that we feared not that the quartermaster would discharge him, or make deduction of pay for dereliction of duty. In this we quite mistook the quartermaster's character; for, in the following spring, on arriving at Fort Leavenworth, Buchanan found all his absences, etc., summed up, and deduction from his pay made in consequence. On the impulse of the moment, he made them a present of the whole of his dues, and in a few hours left in charge of a lot of mules for the army in the south of Mexico.

Se-ne-mone's squaw gave a dogfeast one day. As the Indians are great epicures, the *modus operandi* of preparation may not be uninteresting to our more civilized gourmands, whose tables are bare of a viand, which, undoubtedly, ranks pre-eminent in the list of delicacies and luxuries.

First, a pup of four months' sojourn in this world

of sorrows, so fat he could scarcely waddle, was caught by the affectionate squaw, and turned, and felt, and pinched, to see whether it would do. Then its neck was invested with one end of a buckskin strap, and the other tied short up to the projecting couplingpole of our wagon, while the poor victim to savage appetite, dangling between earth and sky, ki-yi-ed until his little canine spirit departed for the elysium where neither squaws molest, nor dogmeat is eaten; this to the very apparent satisfaction of the laughing women and delighted children, and the no-small annoyance of many large dogs, among whom was the disconsolate mother of the unfortunate. She sent forth, with head and neck elongated, most piteous bewailings, until she received a kick from one of the amazons, which sent her off limping, filling the air with discordant yells, fully as painful to us as was the kick to the recipient of the squaw's marked attentions. She sat on her haunches, at a little distance from us, now and then raising her paw—not to brush away the falling tear, but to rub her nose, on which had fallen the cruel blow.

After hanging half an hour, the pup was taken down and laid on the fire. What! thought I, they are not so heathenish as to offer sacrifice? He was kept on the blaze, with constant turning, until the hair was well singed off, and then cleaned, beheaded, and divided into all imaginable shapes and sizes, and cooked in water for six hours. It was then fished out, and a portion set before us—a slimy, glutinous mass, uninviting to the eye, but nevertheless, most delicate and sweet. Smith laid by one of the hind legs until the next morning; the marbled thin streaks of lean and fat were most tempting. It reminded me of cold roast pig—a faint simile, probably derogatory to the fair fame of dog, for, which degenerate

civilized comparison, I humbly crave the pardon of Se-ne-mone's spouse, and her worthy curs.

Civilized and semi-barbarous nations are represented by flags, on which are their distinctive stars, stripes, or colors. The different Indian tribes have no such distinctions, but differ only in articles of dress, or marks of the body. They use no flag except the white, indicative of peace—a sign, as it would seem, understood by intuition by all the world.

The signification of this tribe, in their own language, is, "cut arm,"[1] from the fact that, at a certain period of their lives, the men make three transverse cuts on the upper side of the arm (or that not next to the body) generally equidistant from the elbow joint and the shoulder, which leave three scars, by their uniformity not a little perplexing on first sight. With this mark they connect grand flourishes, solemn looks, and much invoking of the unseen Spirit, through the medium of the pipe.

The Arapahoes (an adjoining tribe, with whom the Cheyennes intermarry) have three equidistant punctures on the breast.

The mode of keeping the hair is another charac-

---

[1] "*Cut arm*"—the word *Tsis-ts'is-tas* (the tribal name), may better be translated "our people," though it closely resembles the word for "cut arms." Grinnell says that the term "cut arms" was "applied to them from their old practice of cutting strips of skin from their arms to offer in sacrifice, and to bring good fortune." The sign for Cheyenne is made by drawing the right forefinger diagonally towards the body across the back of the forward-directed left forefinger, and probably meant "striped arrow feathers." At a distance, this sign is made by drawing the hand across the arm, which has been mistaken to mean "cut arms," also. The word Cheyenne is not from the French *chien* (dog), but from the Sioux *Sha-hi'-ye-na* meaning "people of alien speech," or "red talkers," referring to their red paint.

teristic. The Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Utah tribes wear their hair in long unconfined locks, cutting it in front close above the eyebrows, so as not to obstruct the vision. The Osage, Pawnee, and Kansas, shave the *os frontis* (and, as Buck remarked, the "os backis"), leaving only a topknot at the crown, which is so taut and greasy, that it stands erect and trembling with every motion of the body.

The peculiar form of the moccasin, especially in the absence of the wearer, is the most certain and usual way of determining the tribe in which it is made.

The Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Comanche, similar in dress and manner, and at peace with each other, use cowskin moccasins, (the cowskin is the same as the robe, divested of hair), the inside edge straight and the extreme point so turned in as to give the wearers the appearance of being what is termed "pigeon-toed," as they really are, in a slight degree. The outside edge is brought around in a continuous curve, until it meets the straight edge at the large toe. They are pleasant, though a white man's foot will not fit snugly, unless it turns in more than usual.

The Pawnee moccasin is the same as if one would place his foot in the center of a piece of buckskin, and make all the edges meet on top of the foot, in front of the ankle. The hinder part is brought up on the leg, and laced to its place by strings. This is the best and easiest shoe, for it fits in every part. Some Mexican-Indian (Pimo)[1] moccasins, that I have worn, are long-toed, with a sole of par-fleche, lapping over on top of the foot, as a protection while tramping the cactus-grown plains.

---

[1]*Pimo*—Pima, a division of the Piman family of Indian tribes, living in the valleys of the Gila and Salt Rivers in southern Arizona.

One morning, before sunrise, while I was soundly sleeping near the fire, Smith's squaw shook me by the shoulder, saying, "*Ve'-heo kiss, ve'-heo kiss! hua, hua, 'sst ve'-heo mok'-ta-bo*"—"Young white man, young white man! get up! there's a black white man at the door."

I rose to see a genuine specimen of the thick-lipped negro. The squaw was at a loss for words to call him properly; certainly it was not intended as a compliment to us, to call him a "black white man."

At first I could understand nothing the negro said, so mixed were his words with Indian terms; but, inviting him in, and paying attention, I learned that he was a slave to a Cherokee, Ross,[1] and that he accompanied a surveying party (from his description of the instruments), and which had been charged upon by a Comanche force, who, killing the most of his party, took him prisoner to their village. Here he stayed for many months, until his captors, having confidence in him, made him a brave. They went to Chihuahua, Mexico, where, in several battles, they captured hundreds of mules and many prisoners; among them some women, who were taken as the wives of chiefs. For his own prowess he was given a squaw. But he longed for other lands, and watched for every opportunity to escape; but none offered, until in a fatal conflict with the Mexicans, his party was routed. He saved himself from the triumphant lances by plunging into a stream where he remained for two days, his persecutors on the watch. He showed me a lance wound in his wrist, and an arrow

[1]*John Ross*—Principal chief of the Cherokee Indians, (1790-1866), then residing in what is now Oklahoma. The negro was possibly with a party surveying the Cherokee Outlet, an extension of their reservation towards the Rocky Mountains given them to allow of their hunting in the west.

mark through his arm. When the Mexicans were gone, he quietly slipped out, and groping around, found a bow and arrows. He took a course, knowing not whither it led; and, after nearly three months constant walking, subsisting on wild rosebuds, and whatever could be picked up, he made his way in sight of our village. Lying around for a day, until satisfied that we were not Comanches, he appeared the morning I first saw him. The straightforwardness and simplicity of his story dispelled all doubts as to its veracity.

I traded Paint to an Indian for a mule—the poor grass and my hard riding being too severe. His new owner ran him for buffalo two consecutive days in the snow which covered the ground from twenty-five to twenty-eight inches in depth, and not coming up to the game the last day (no wonder! for the horse was turned out after the first hunt, heated, tired, and hungry, to find his food in the snow, so deep that only the tops of weeds were visible), he brought him back to me. I made a virtue of necessity and returned the Indian his mule, taking possession again of poor, old, broken-down Pinto. Had I refused to re-swap, he would probably have stolen the mule from me at night, and retained my horse too; and, being at the tender mercy of the whole tribe (as there were but two of us and a Mexican), I could not retaliate. What would have been worse, the unfair horsetrader might have taken my scalp for presuming to dictate to him, a loyal, pure-blooded Cheyenne. I smothered my feelings of resentment, though my wishes were "pistols for two—coffee for one."

Snow was deep; "fat cow" a luxury not to be thought of; horses too poor to "run" meat; and a scant supply of "poor bull", was all the provision with which to satisfy hunger. In this emergency,

the inroads upon the dog population were most alarming and destructive.

On the 6th of January, two Indians arrived from the upper village bringing orders for us to join William Bent, with our goods, etc., without delay. A storm arising, gave a chilling prospect, and added to the already-accumulated snowdrifts.

On the 7th, I traded Paint to Smith, by giving thirty dollars in addition. Smith who had several animals, could afford to keep the horse until he fattened, but I needed one for present service. My new exchange was a raw-boned, impetuous piece of mule flesh—her temper, eye, and sharp feet as full of the spirit with which Old Nick is supposed to be possessed, as well could be.

We heard from O-cum-who-wurst's village, at the Buttes[1], a day's ride hence, that a Pawnee war party had succeeded in running off forty of their best animals. The close proximity of the horse stealers caused some trepidation in our village, and even we felt like *caching*.[2]

[1]*The Buttes*—Twin Buttes, on the headwaters of Two Butte Creek, which flows into the Arkansas River from the south opposite Big Salt Bottom. Near the Kansas line in Prowers County, Colorado.

[2]*Caching*—hiding, "digging in." Unless protected by a wagon corral, men on the plains rarely attempted to defend their camp in case of attack, but left it and took cover behind some natural fortification, if possible.

CHAPTER VIII

The Snow Tramp

On the 8th, we packed our robes and possibles (personal property), and by eleven o'clock the wagon, with its two yoke of half-famished oxen attached, ready for a start, was on the top of the hill. The sun shone clear, reflecting, in the intense cold, from the incrusted snow points, millions of miniature diamonds. We parted cheerfully with our kind-hearted Indian host, Se-ne-mone; and I did not omit to take the hand of his daughter, Red Dress, to tell her good-bye. At the same instant, the recollections of the gay dances around scalps in her company, with other graceful Houris, enveloped in the same blanket, and our commingled *hay-he-a-hay* (scalp chorus) rising above the other voices, sent a momentary pang vibrating through me. I half wanted to stay. The poor shivering Indians, standing in the deep snow, saw us off.

The surface of the country, on this (the south) side of the river, was greatly broken. Large sandhills sloped to the river's very edge; others, with a strip of land intervening, were frequent, the loose, slippy nature of which made the footing uncertain, the travel laborious. The poor oxen, toiling through snow up to the briskets, were to be pitied. The Bent's Fort trail was on the opposite side.

We went on for some hours; now on the steep side of a glazed sand butte, and now on top, with the freezing wind shooting pains through our heads; now again stretching across a low bottom, at a tediously slow rate. On the exclamation by the blue-lipped squaw, of *"po-ome! no-wa 'sst,"* we looked the

direction she pointed, to perceive an Indian urging his animal through the snow with all speed.

"Ten'-o-wast? (What is it?)" asked Smith, making "sign," as the savage drew rein alongside, most opportunely for his panting animal.

The amount of the conversation was, that he had a big heart for Pinto; he loved him very much, and, in a few moments, his saddle was changed to Pinto, and, shaking hands with us, he urged him back toward the village, while we kept our way.

We talked of the battle of New Orleans[1] (this was the anniversary)—of the bravery evinced—the probability of another war: but plowing through the snow and the tingling cold were no aids to prolonged dissertations on the merits and demerits of Jackson and his army. Weather a little more severe would have dismounted us.

We felt with our feet, on the river's edge, for pieces of wood, and, with numbed fingers, knocked the snow from them. These, with the aid of a few handfuls of dead willow twigs, served as fuel. Watering the animals through a hole in the ice-bound river, we left them hobbled in a hollow, exposed to the storm's pitiless peltings, to eke a scanty meal from the weeds and stray blades of grass laid bare by the frame-pervading blasts. We cut brush; and clearing a small space of the snow, laid our robes and blankets on the boughs, and sitting, with crossed legs, stared at the flickering blaze rising through the still and piercing air, our pipes charged with fragrant "Honeydew," or "Single Twist"; the holders every moment blowing out blue clouds of smoke, calculated, at most any other time, to sicken, but now, not a bit too strong. By turning our eyes to

[1]*Battle of New Orleans*—General Andrew Jackson's post-bellum victory over the British, War of 1812.

the darkness, we could see the dusky forms of our congregated *caballada*, with backs bowed, and tails to the blast, too cold to paw for grass, now snorting as a hungry wolf crossed the wind, or feebly answering an inquiring whinny from a timid mule, scared at its own tramping in the dry, frosty snow.

It is strange how self-satisfied one is when safely in camp. There we, at an almost unapproachable distance from anywhere, amid snowstorms, with scarcely a hearty meal, in a barren country, too freezing cold to hunt, sat on our soft robes, acknowledging the grateful warmth of the coals (shuddering, perhaps, as a cold puff of wind, coursing on the crusted snow, struck our backs and caused us to pull the blankets more closely to our necks)—chatting as unconcernedly as if surrounded by luxuries such as large fires and plenty to eat. After some experience in a prairie *voyageur's* life, I can say that never was I more contented, more silently happy, than when, with snow wreaths drifted interminably for miles and miles around, with a choice companion or two, cosily seated by a small comfortable fire, with plenty of tobacco and a modicum of meat to sustain life, I have listened to the baying of wolves, and have imagine the Hemadryades' tuneful signs, mingling with the crackling of the frosted tree branches, while the mournful cadences of the wind, sweeping up the vale with wild fury, would burst over our heads, with shrieks of crazy delight—now dying away in harmonious deflections, anon increasing in vigor, yet never ending.

And, on composing oneself to sleep, with what care does he place his feet, well-covered by thick moccasins, to the broadest blaze! Then, sitting on his robe, he tucks it around his legs and body, high as the waist, and falls back with his face turned from rude

Boreas, retaining his soft wool hat to serve as a breakwind to his head, resting on the saddle for pillow. There he is, warm, comfortable and selfish; nothing short of Indians, or fire on the deer robe, would stir him an inch. Then, in the morning, how hard he is to rouse! His cold blue nose, exposed to the weather, is sensitive enough, in its gradations from warm to cold, to serve as thermometer—"B'low zero, wagh! too cold," and he draws within himself, shuddering at the bare idea of facing the breeze. "Darn breakfast! when a feller's fixed I wouldn't git up for the fattest meat as runs on the peraira; t'aint often this buffler is comfortable, an' when he is, he knows it," and off he drops into dreamland,

> *"Chasing the stag*
> *From crag to crag."*

indicating by convulsive twitchings of the hands or contortions of the face, the contending passions by which he is actuated when in quest of game, or "raising" the "hair" of a skulking Pawnee, who has been audacious and unfortunate enough to steal his animals.

Our Mexican was up first, and kindled a fire. All soon rising, we drove the *caballada* to camp, from the leeward of a bank, whither they had retreated, standing with low, drooping heads, and indicating, by a glance at their hollow flanks, the scanty meal they had eaten; choosing rather to starve, than push away with aching noses, or paw with balled feet, the cold snow from the withered herbage of this region, at no time remarkable in excellency.

The morning was bitter, bitter cold. Our exhaled breath rapidly condensed; which, with the blowing of the animals as they were forced over the deep snow, enveloped us in a cloud of vapor. We strung

out, first one then the other in front; the Mexican with his ox-team following. In the wake was our squaw, astride of a large sorrel horse, muffled in robes. Clinging to her back was the boy, *Wo-pe-kon-ne*, "wi' his lint-white locks," garyish-white eyes, and sallow face, visible through an opening—an airhole in the hairy covering.

About eleven o'clock in the morning we saw a party of men trailing toward the States. Urging our mules through the snow, nearly breast high, to the river, we were met by one of them, who crossed the ice on foot. He was almost hid in the folds of a robe overcoat, extra moccasins, heavy hat, and his right hand grasped a thick, large-bored rifle. On nearing, he shouted—"How are ye, Smith, old coon? Whar now—are ye makin' tracks to Fort William?"[1]

"Why, Boggs, old hos," rejoined Smith, "what's up? You've got so much 'fofarraw' stuck 'bout you, this child didn't savvy at fust! Which way?"

"Well old Kurnel Price[2] wanted some one to take the trail for the States on express; and, as none but mountain men can 'come in' now, he gave me six hundred dollars to 'travel' with letters and dispatches. But, I tell 'ee it 'll be a chargin' time, for the snow is bad some, now."

"Who's with you; right sort of stuff for this season?"

"Oh! a lot of darned gover'ment men; but as I'm

---

[1]*Fort William*—Bent's Old Fort, often so called.

[2]*Colonel Sterling Price*—"Old Pap Price," commanding 2nd Missouri Infantry, then at Santa Fe, New Mexico. Afterward, Major General C. S. A., died 1867 . . . Tom O. Boggs, mountain man from Missouri, friend and executor to Kit Carson, trader for Bent's Fort, founder of Boggsville, near Las Animas, Colorado. The Cheyennes called him Wohk'-po-hum, "White Horse."

'bugheway'[1] they do pretty well. Well I must break —how are ye off for cowmeat?"

"H—! cowmeat, this freezin' time? You've bin down to Santy Fee too long. Why, 'poor bull' is hard to git, *boudin* out of the question and *'gras'* (fat) so scarce we don't think of it. Howsomever, if you want to chaw on lean buffler dried, you can have it 'on the prairie' (free). *Hombre, Pedro, mira! venica cary por carne, poquita!* (Pedro, look here, want a little meat)", shouted Smith to our Mexican.

"Na-wa! o-n-a-vokeo—(Quick, some meat for the white man)"—to his squaw.

He took about half—not much to be sure, but seemingly a great deal—and crossed the river, while we started the team, the wagonwheels creaking and singing as they pressed the stalagmitic snow. We were thoroughly benumbed, and rode in a state nearly amounting to torpidity. How I silently wished for the warm and pleasant home left but a few months previously! How we longed for fire—no wood to be had—even coffee would have given comfort. Our pipes were the only solace in this trying time, but one tires of that, or sickens by too-frequent use. As far as the eye could reach, on all sides, was a boundless expanse of snow, snow, snow! above, the dreary, dull-gray winter sky; no sun to cheer us, or to impart warmth. Every step, every motion, every glance, bore down instead of relieving us. I shut my eyes, wearied and sick of the white monotonous drapery; which, in my bewildered fancy, seemed to look on unmoved at us stiffening by degrees; and, by mocking, freezing placidity, to check all buoyant hope or retrospect. To add to the wretchedness of mind, large, gaunt white wolves, attracted through keen

---

[1]*Bugheway* (*bourgeoise*)—master, leader. L. H. G.

hunger, stealthily followed, or dashed across our way like spectres—spirits of the stormwind—and burst, hellhound-like, into prolonged, fearful howls, rousing us from our apathy, to cause shudders to pervade our chilled and weakened frames.

Camp at night and its few duties soon were completed, for our provision (if a little dried meat, without bread, coffee, or salt could be called provision) was scanty, requiring no cooking or preparation but thorough mastication.

Sunrise saw us on the tramp. It was so cold, Smith left his gun (a most foolish thing, not to be expected of a mountaineer) in the wagon. Though I hardly had the sense of feeling, I retained my rifle in front of the saddle. In the afternoon we were finding a practicable route in the drifts, for the team; and, in so doing, stayed several hundred yards ahead, and out of sight of the wagon. Seeing a party approaching, Smith called my attention to it with—

"Look ahead! there's white men."

I gave a shout, at the same moment digging my spurs into the mule's side—"Hooray, we'll have meat and coffee to-night; but look! they wear Mexican hats."

"So they do," replied he, after a scrutiny; "but they won't bother us; they know me too well to cut shines—John Smith's name not to be grinned at by a darned carahoing 'palou'[1]—Wagh! Indians, by beaver!" hurriedly said he, changing his tone, "keep your eye skinned; I have left my gun in the wagon, and have nothing but a knife."

I put on a fresh cap without changing the position of my rifle, so as not to excite the attention of the coming party, though one gun was as nothing against

---

[1]*Palou*—corruption of Spanish Mexican *pelado*, loafer.

thirty Arapahoes. We met them with as little show of trepidation as could be helped, and advancing to the foremost grim savage, offered our hands. The fellow took the proffered advance of amity with coldness, and stopped still. We dared not pass by, and asked him—

"*Ten-o-wast?*—What is it you wish?"

He looked silently at us, and again we chidingly asked, in the Cheyenne tongue, "*Ten-o-wast?*"

"*Ni-hi-ni, veheo, matsebo esevone Arapaho,*" answered he. The amount of his answer was, that the "white man was bad, that he ran the buffalo out of the country, and starved the Arapaho."

Smith explained that he had been trading a long time with the Cheyenne, whom he loved, and who was brother to the Arapaho; that he only took what meat he wanted, and (pointing to his squaw) that his wife was a Cheyenne. The Arapaho must not blame him. It was the white man from the States (Government men) with wagons, who scared the buffalo from him and his children. It was always his intention to live and die with the Cheyenne, for he had thrown away his brothers in the States. The Cheyenne lodge was his home—they smoked the same pipe—the broad prairie suported them both.

"The white man has a forked tongue," replied the chief, impatiently, raising his hand to his mouth, and sending it in a direct line with two of the fingers open, and stretched far apart, to signify a fork or divergence from a point.

"*I-sto-met, wah-hein* (p'shaw, no)," said Smith.

"*Ni-hi-ni, ni-hi-ni, Hook-ah-hay* (Yes, yes, goodbye)" and, off they rode, trying yet without much open manifestation, to drive our little band of horses with theirs, but, by a dexterous interposition of

Smith, he turned their heads, preventing the quiet trick of our brothers, the Arapahoes.

Smith told me, after they left, that they were just returning from a successful marauding expedition into New Mexico, with several scalps, two prisoners, and thirty, or more, horses and mules, which they then had with them. Happy was it for us, that their vengeance was wreaked on other unfortunates than ourselves. We, however, feared for our swarthy son of Mexico, the oxdriver—as he was of the same stripe as those to whom the scalps dangling from the Arapaho lance points, originally belonged. We waited, with some doubts, as to his safety, until he made his appearance.

The poor wretch! there he came, plying the whip vigorously to his tired yoke. When, within hearing distance, we distinguished the fierce spoken words, "Geet up—*Caraho! Wo-ha-ha—los Rapaho.*"

"Did you see the Indians, Pedro?"

"*Si Señor, a-a-h Caraho! los Rapaho; muchos diablos—grandote, muchos, muchos* (d—n the Arapahoes —big devils)."

"Did they touch you, the darned niggurs?"

"*Si!*" replied he, in a tone of vexation, "*Si, mucho,* dis a way," jerking himself to and fro by the hair, "Dis a way, pull me bout, de dam Rapaho; dey want *carne* (meat), want carabine, dey want mucho"; and added he, ready to burst into tears, "dey want my hair. Me feel for my *cuchillo* (knife), but de one *lancero grandote,* he luk mad—he raise his lance. By an' by dey mount the *cavallas* (horses), dey go way—"

"Yes!" said Smith, "but, it's too cold here to talk —start up your team, we must be to a good camp before night, for it'll freeze the nose off a feller's face in the morning."

The queerest part of this meeting with the Indians was that after their departure, Smith upbraided me for turning pale, and showing fear, while his face was blanched and wore a peculiar rigidity of features and nervous twinkling of the eyelids. The fact is, we were both scared badly.

An hour before the sun set, saw us stopping on an island, for the sake of a little dry grass for the animals, and the twisted, partly decayed stump of a fallen cottonwood for ourselves—both things quite essential this inclement season.

My mule was an obstinate, foolish animal, and to keep her from returning to the village, a hobble was necessary every night. The rest of the *caballada* was as usual, snorting and pawing for grass, or wandering around, before mine was let loose; and while I in the snow, was adjusting the hobble, she was impatiently stamping, and frettingly held by the bridle. So soon as I rose to my feet, and pulled the headstall from her brow, off she started, with a squeal, the rein still on her neck. To prevent her trampling on the bit, I caught it in my hand and kept up alongside. She rushed into the water, splashing my moccasins and buckskins to the knee; by the time she had hauled me in the ripple to her satisfaction and jerked me down several times, my scalp-knife was out of his sheath.

To keep my limbs from freezing from the effects of the already congealed water with which my moccasins and pants were saturated, while Smith and Pedro were making a fire, I took a sheet-iron camp-kettle—an Indian article of trade—to the river for water, which labor might restore the circulation. Under a bank, several springs kept the water from freezing hard; I broke it with but little difficulty, and, reaching down the bucket to dip and fill it, in

I followed. Scrambling out, I hurried to camp with the water in frozen pellets on my clothes and hair.

Smith, standing with back to the fire, shouted as I approached, "Ho, boy! wet? you're more like a ducked beaver 'an anything this hos has seen yet. Cold, eh?"

"*Caraho!*" cried Pedro, looking up from the ground, where he was seated, drying his torn moccasins, "*Señor, tu muy freo?* (Are you very cold?)"

We cleared the snow for several feet around the fire, so as not to melt and make a muddy camp. Spreading down my robe, I wrung and dried my clothes.

For supper each took a little piece of dried buffalo meat and chewed on it until the strength was gone; then, smoking, we went to bed to dream of the many good things some persons have and know not how to appreciate. As I was now not at all fastidious, Pedro and I shared the same robes.

In the morning, seeing that the *caballada* had had but little to eat, and the cold being so intense, a day in camp was thought best. A snowstorm, with all its blustering fury, burst upon us during the morning and lasted half the day, driving the rottenwood smoke in our eyes, so that small comfort was gained by the fire. We would sit in one position until nearly stifled; a change to the opposite side was only for the wind to veer and drive us again away. We had no tent, of course, and the shifting wind monopolized every good position.

What a prospect was in advance! Snow twenty-two to twenty-eight inches deep; our mules starving; the oxen broken down with fatigue; not more than one day's scanty portion of dried meat, and nothing else; any attempt at hunting almost certain death; and, at least two days' travel to William

Bent's village; although there were but forty miles between the two (one day's trip in pleasant weather; now five for us.) Verily, this is the dark side of prairie life!

We ventured to start the following morning, but dared not ride for fear of freezing to the saddles, though tramping in the snow was severely fatiguing.

The few pairs of socks brought with me from the States were long before worn out, and my moccasins coming only to the anklebone, left bare part of the foot and leg. The snow soon filled the hollow under the instep, which I at first raked out with my forefinger; but, becoming so benumbed, I forgot it, and it congealed unheeded in a solid mass.

We kept on foot all that day, without stopping, dragging one weary foot after the other until near night, and encamped on an island, with plenty of wood and high grass. Our mules procured their food only by pawing, in which mode they became adepts. With tobacco, and a stinted ration of "poor bull," we managed to pass the evening.

We left camp the next sunrise, with keen appetites and nothing to eat, and traveled the entire day without stopping. An hour or two before dark, Smith approached some antelope, leaving his bridle-rein in the squaw's hand. The band afar off scented us, though they scarcely moved; while we anxiously watched Smith, stealthily drawing nigh. Hunger rendered him cautious; and when within two hundred yards, he fired, bringing down a doe. The others ran across the river, stopping once to gaze back at their fallen companion. I imagined the teardrops glistening in their big dark eyes. Our hearts were now made glad, for we had a prospect of plenty; and, as fortune never comes single-handed, the snow decreased in depth, enabling us to travel in a fast

walk. At camp, we used part of the rather unmasticable and poor "goat;" which, however, was better than nothing; and, to make up for the deficiency of our larder of the past few days, we lingered by the red coals late.

Did anyone ever hear of the *Gros Ventres*[1] Indians? *Well*, we were the same, so far as the name goes, about the hour for retiring.

The travel improved; snow not more than twelve or fourteen inches in depth. The oxen labored less heavily. Smith's gravity relaxed in a degree; and I, being crammed with goatmeat, felt fine.

Near noon the squaw cried out—"*Po-one, na-wa Cheyennes!*"—"Blackfoot (Smith), look ahead, Cheyenne!" pointing to an approaching body of men, women, children, horses, and lodges. It was part of the upper village, on the march.

The first few we merely saluted *en passant*. Then came the Morning Mist and her father, Vip-po-nah; and, after them, Smiling Moon, riding on a lodge-dray. Her kind eyes beamed with tempered rays of affection, but Smith marred the pleasurableness of our meeting by informing me that she had, during my absence, married—run off with one of the village exquisites. I was quite unhappy for an hour, and rode in silence, apart from the joking Smith, but finally consoled myself with the idea that there was more than one pretty Indian girl in the world.

We found William Bent in his lodge, with his squaws, children,[2] and goods for trading. A few

---

[1]*Gros Ventres*—Name applied either to (1) the Atsina, a detached band of Arapaho, called "always hungry," "beggars," or to (2) the Hidatsa, a tribe of Siouan stock closely related to the Crows, accustomed to tattoo their chests. A similar sign of the gesture speech caused a confusion of names. (French for Big Bellies.)

[2]Bent's children, at this date, were Mary, aged eight,

steps distant was another cone, in which were Fisher[1] and Long Lade, traders, Piérre and one other, employees. We abode in the back part. The village was a quarter of a mile off—a desirable distance—for we could trade without the usual bother and throng. No snow, except on the shady declivities, chilled us with the sight; the sun shone joyously; the horses capered on the greensward, and the dull, but comfort-recalling drum-notes, in honor of fresh scalps, were heard once more. We reclined that night in the warm lodge, with feet to the fire, new faces to look at, and stomachs filled with "fat cow" and coffee. A casual observer could have seen, "By the smoke, which so gracefully curled" from our pipes, that contentment reigned within.

Robert, aged five, and George, aged three. "Squaws" here must refer to William's wife's mother, or her relatives. He had but one wife—Owl Woman.

[1]*Fisher*—an American known as No-ma-ni (Fish) to the Cheyennes, from whom Fisher's Hole (a valley in the mountains on the headwaters of the San Carlos River) takes its name, as also, probably, the village near Pueblo, Colorado, and Fisher's Peak, in the Raton Mountains.

CHAPTER IX

Prospective Trouble

The crack of the oxwhip, and the "wo-ha-a" of the drivers, broke the stillness of our quiet retreat. The blow of the ax, and the small dwelling for trading goods, raised by our puny efforts, were but the precursors of a settlement, for already do these Indians talk of tilling the ground.[1]

This particular vicinity is called the Big Timber —a strip of woods extending for several miles along the river. As a general thing there is little or no timber on the Arkansas, from the Cimarron crossing, to the headwaters, with the exception of this belt, which the Indians consider their future home.

My single pair of pantaloons was completely worn out before I procured others. Being in want of the buckskins, I took my rifle, and, skirting the village, crossed to William Tharpe's trading lodges. In the largest was the owner, reclining on robes and smoking; and judge of my surprise, when before me sat a fair-skinned woman and two children. She was the proprietor's Mexican wife.

When Mr. Tharpe was getting the buckskins, I could do no less than stare at his wife, and the other appendages of civilization, hanging around, in the shape of dresses, etc., but the woman did not compare, in point of symmetry of features, with my faithless Smiling Moon. With the skins under my arm,

---

[1]About this time, Yellow Wolf, a chief, proposed to give the interpreter at Bent's Fort a mule for every man in the tribe, on condition that he build a similar fort for the Cheyennes, so that they could settle down and farm. (Abert, J. W., Senate Document 438, 29th Congress, (1st Session) Fremont Exploring Expedition, 1845-6.)

I bowed myself out, and "made beaver" for Mr. Bent's lodge, on the way passing through a bottom, in hopes of finding deer, several of which were seen disappearing, before my gun could be brought to bear on them.

While the pantaloons were being cut out by the enterprising John Smith, and sewed by his squaw, with awl and sinew, I wore a breechcloth, *a la mode Cheyenne,* manufactured of a leg of my old pants. They were rather worse for wear, than when I sat with them in a daguerreotype room before leaving home, trying to look my sweetest for a fond relative. With breechcloth, blanket, painted face, and moccasins, I made a very respectable looking savage.

O-cum-who-wust, principal chief of the Cheyennes, visited us a few days following our arrival. He was talking with Smith, when the kettle boiled over. Instantly, yet deliberately, he laid down the pipe, which he was about to smoke, and, covering his head with the robe, bowed himself to the ground, silently remaining in that position several minutes. On rising, his countenance wore a resigned, though sad, aspect, as of one engaged in spiritual devotion.

The notion prevails here, that the ashes, raised by ebulliting liquid, engenders a disease of the eye; and it is with much trepidation that they sit until the cloud settles. Often, indeed, their negligent spouses are lodge-poled (beaten) for such accidents; the fear of punishment keeps them on the alert, when anything is cooking. Smith's poor woman had consternation strongly depicted on her face, and he helped her through with looks most grim and menacing.

The Cheyenne marriage ceremony is not a little curious. As in all cases, whether civilized or savage, the matter is talked of and arranged by the anxious pair, long before the friendly or inimical interposi-

tion of those deeming themselves the guardians of inexperienced youth. Then follows the formality of asking for the fair one, which, though it may seem mercenary, must not be entirely so considered, as it is the invariable custom.

At night, when all are supposed to be asleep, the lover, selecting his best horse, ties it up to the lodge of his father-in-law to be, where it stays until morning. If it is put with their band, he is accepted; if not, it stays tied, exposed to the jeers of the village boys, and the stinging laugh of the girls (who are ever ready to make fun) until night again. Then the jilted youth sneaks up and takes it away, or makes an additional propitiatory offering.

If the father is an inexorable tyrant, the loving couple sometimes take hasty leave for parts unknown.[1]

The queerest oddities with the Cheyennes are gray-haired children. From the age of three, up, they can be seen going about, like so many little old men and women. The hair is not white, or tow, but real streaked, black and gray, such as we would see on a man of forty-five. I could neither see nor hear of the cause. The owners of the premature growth, had juvenile, healthy faces, as others of their years, though there may be an affection of the roots of the hair. Possibly, as there is an edict saying that the iniquities of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generations, these innocents have to don the venerable locks before the proper time because their great, great grandfathers happened to stick their tantalizing lance-

[1]The young man is then said to "steal his woman." Generally, his relatives smooth matters over, by making presents to the girl's father.

points the eighth of an inch too far in some poor Pawnee prisoner. *Qu'en sabe?*

On the morning of the 28th, Smith and I were in the log house, trading *o-ne-a-wokst* (beads) to an old squaw for *o-ne-a-voke* (a piece of meat). While asking for an addition to our already large contribution, she pointed with her mouth to an approaching object, saying, "*po-ome! num-whit ve-heo* (Blackfoot! Look yonder, there's a white man)."

Coming close, he hailed us, "How are ye, John?"

"What! Louy, old coon, down hyar? How's times to Fort William!—but let's see, you's the one as run 'meat'[1] for them gover'ment fellers to Bent's ranch —eh?"[2]

"Yes! an' this child was mighty nigh losin' his har, he was."

"How?"

"Them darned Spaniards!"[2]

"H—! anybody 'gone under 'to Touse?"

"Yes! Guverner Charles.[3]

"Wa-agh! but them palous 'll pay for their scalpin' yet, I'm thinkin'."

We went into the lodge, where the men, after recovering from the surprise of seeing an old *compañero*, were told the sad news of Governor Bent's death, and while Louy was stowing away huge pieces of buffalo, he was interrogated by the anxious traders.—

---

[1]*Run meat*"—hunt buffalo, or other game for food. Bent, St. Vrain & Co. had a number of ranches south and west of the Arkansas River.

[2]*Spaniards*—Mexicans were so called on the frontier then. L. H. G.

[3]*Charles Bent* (1799-1847), elder brother of William, partner in Bent, St. Vrain & Co., appointed first Governor of New Mexico after its occupation by Kearny. Murdered January 19, 1847, in his house at Taos.

"Louy, tell all 'bout the whole consarn; it's all over now, an' can't be worse. I 'spect the niggurs got my woman[1] too," said Fisher, who was a resident of Taos, the scene of the massacre. "Who else is under, 'sides Charles?"

"Well, you see the Purblos (Pueblos de Taos) was mity mad fur the 'Mericans to come in thar diggins an' take everything so easy like; an' as Injin blood is bad an' sneakin', they swore to count *coups* when they could. So when Charles was down to Touse to see his woman, the palous charged afore sunrise. The portal was too strong fur 'em, an' they broke in with axes, an' a Purblo, *cached* behint a pile of dobies, shot him with a Nor'west fusee twice, an' skulped him."

"Scalped him—scalped Charles?" cried the men, partly springing to their feet, and clutching their knives, "thar be heap of wolfmeat afore long—sartain!"

"Yes, an' they took the trail for Santy Fee; but afore they left, Stephe Lee dropped in his tracks too. 'Hell!' says I, 'the palou as threw that arrer is marked,' an' so he is—Wa-agh!"

"Was Narcisse Beaubien[2] killed, Louy?" asked I.

"Who? that young feller as kem with the wagons, last fall, with St. Vrain?"

"Yes, the same."

"Oh, he's gone beaver 'long with the rest. He was Mexican blood, an' so much the better fur them. They had a big dance when his topknot was off.

---

[1]*Woman*—mountain men always referred to their wives as "women."

[2]*Narcisse Beaubien*, son of Judge Carlos Beaubien, of Taos, and brother-in-law to Ceran St. Vrain. Narcisse was with the wagon train with which Garrard travelled to Bent's Fort.

Well, you see," commencing once more, "a band of the devils got to the Poinel ranch, over Touse Mountain, and back agin with the biggest kind of cavyard. Maybe *coups* wasn't counted that trip. The sojers—a lot of greenhorns and Dutchmen—came to Purgatoire, this side of Raton.[1] Frank De Lisle had the company's wagons, an' the boys thar. We *cached* along the trail fur the Arkansa—well we did! Mule-meat went a wolfin' that spree—Wagh!"

"Where is Drinker (the Cincinnati Editor)? He was at the ranch, I believe."

"Out in the pinyon, that morning, with his big Saint Loui' gun—a Jake Hawkins gun,[2] she was, eh? He had bullets an inch long, with a sharp pint—be doggoned ef they wasn't some, eh?— We had to leave him, but I guess he'll come in safe.

"Will they take Santy Fee, think ye, Louy?" inquired Fisher.

"Now that's more than this hos kin tell. He hasn't made 'medicine' yet; but I'm afraid the 'Mericans will 'go under."

Louy was called from the lodge by William Bent. We pitied William. His murdered brother, being much older than himself and George, was loved and respected as a father.

The news had quite a depressing effect upon us.

---

[1]*Raton*—a mountain range, a mountain pass, and a town, Colfax County, New Mexico, on the route to Taos from Bent's Fort.

[2]*Jake Hawkins' gun*—a favorite with the trappers, described by Ruxton (*Life in the Far West*) as "Of very heavy metal, carrying about thirty-two balls to the pound, stocked to the muzzle, and mounted with brass; its only ornament being a buffalo bull, looking exceedingly ferocious, which was not very artistically engraved upon the trap in the stock."—Hawkins was trapper, gunsmith at St. Louis, and trader at Pueblo, Colorado.

We were even apprehensive of our own safety in case the Santa Fean forces were overpowered; for it was probable that the country, from El Paso[1] to El Valle de Taos, had revolted; and, as Bent's Fort contained much of value, and was an important post, a Mexican expedition might well be expected.

When the Indians learned the death of their old friend, Woh-pi ve-heo—"the gray-haired white man"—criers were sent out, and the people harangued. After consultation, the chiefs proposed that the young men should march to Taos and scalp every Mexican within reach. But Mr. Bent, thanking them, declined, saying that the soldiers at the fort would go if necessary.

At the following dawn, Mr. Bent and I left for the fort, some forty miles distant, taking no baggage but the ropes strapped to the saddles.

The morning was cold and cloudy, in consonance with our moody taciturnity. Keeping the south bank of the river for some miles, we attempted a ford. Our fractious mules gave much trouble, detaining us a vexatious half hour; we then broke the ice, and dragged and pushed in their unwilling feet by main strength.

While breasting the strong wind, which keeps the trail nicely swept as with a broom, we saw, emerging from a patch of high marshgrass, skirting a belt of cottonwoods on the river's margin, a Mexican, mounted on a strong, iron-gray horse. He wore, in lieu of a hat, a handkerchief bound over his head, under the edges of which long jetty locks flitted to the breeze. His right hand grasped a short bow and a few arrows. He was passing at a gallop, when Bent, with his cocked rifle, shouted in Spanish to

[1]*El Paso*—the city of that name in Texas.

stop. The man stated that he belonged to William Tharpe's company; but the skulk's restless eye, and his every motion, seemed to indicate more than he told. After a searching cross-examination, Bent told him to *vamos, pronto!* (go quick), or he would send a ball through him, anyhow. I expected to see the Mexican pitch from his horse, through the aid of a bullet. Bent turned to follow him, expressing a regret at not having taken a shot.

By sundown we reached the fort, having traveled the entire day without ten minutes' halt, almost without a word of conversation. Fifty dirty, uncouth, green-looking Missourians, in command of Captain Jackson, hung about us as we left the saddles.

There was much excitement in regard to the massacre, some expecting a Mexican army to appear on the hill across the river; others, strutting inside the high and secure fort walls, gasconaded and looked fierce enough to stare a mad "bluffer" out of countenance, declaring themselves ready to wade up to their necks in Mexican blood. Every one, however, had cause for fear, as the American force was known to be small and much weakened by being scattered in small herding parties, throughout the province. The traders, etc., proposed to push right on to Taos, steal all the animals, "raise" all the attainable Mexican "hair," burn every ranch, and "charge" generally.

A while before dusk, an express from the Arkansas Pueblo,[1] seventy miles above, arrived with the news that the United States detachment of volunteers, stationed there, were awaiting orders from Jackson, the superior in command. But the *Captain* (*Jack-*

---

[1]*Arkansas Pueblo*—A settlement of mountaineers, with their Indian and Mexican wives, and the station of a detachment of the Mormon Battalion. L. H. B. Now the city of Pueblo, Colorado.

son) would not act without orders from Colonel Price, at Santa Fe, at that time likely a prisoner. So the idea of aid in that quarter was reluctantly abandoned.

Louy Simonds, on leaving the ranch, cut across the country, by that means preceding the wagons several days. The morning after our arrival, Frank De Lisle's wagons coralled in front of the fort. My old friends, the Canadian teamsters, shook my hand heartily—finer fellows were never soaked by the prairie storms.

About ten o'clock, as I was standing at the far end of the court, a tall man stalked in the gate, looking wildly around. A long browned rifle rested on his shoulder, with that exquisite *neglige* air—firm yet careless-appearing; his long, black, uncombed hair hung in strings from beneath his greasy wool hat; and a frowning moustache gave a Satanic cast to his features. On his feet were thick moccasins, to judge from the cut, of his own fashioning. His pantaloons, of gray cassinet, were thread-bare, and rudely patched with buckskin. Instead of a coat, a blanket was thrown over the shoulder and fastened at the waist by a black leather belt, in which was thrust a brass-studded leather sheath, sustaining a "Green River" of no small pretensions as to length; and which, had it the power of speech, might dwell with ecstatic pleasure on the praise of choice *morceaus* of fleece, served by its keen edge—perchance astonish with the recital of the number of "Yutes," whose "humpribs" have been savagely tickled with its searching point. His quick eye, wandering, alighted on me, followed by—

"How are you?"

"Why, Drinker!" exclaimed I, in the utmost surprise, and taking his outstretched hand, "I'm glad to

see you—Louy Simonds told us that the Spaniards had taken your 'hair.' "

"Oh p'shaw! not yet, I can assure you."

"Did you travel by yourself all the way?"

"No, not quite. I went out hunting that morning, and became so interested in a beaver dam, that it was night before the ranch was reached again. Our men were gone, but I cooked some of the "goat" I had that day killed, and on Louy's old deerskins, lying about camp, I slept until morning. I then followed their trail on foot, toward the Vermaho.[1] The second day I caught up to a train, but they being too slow, I pushed ahead by myself. I overtook the company's wagons yesterday, and have been alone the rest of the time."

"That's a quick trip for a pedestrian. How long were you in coming? It's about one hundred and seventy miles."

"Oh! a little over six days. My moccasins nearly gone the way of all flesh"—replied he looking at his feet.

Mr. Bent determining that something should be done, called his men together; and, stating the facts of the case, ended by saying they could go or stay—as they chose. Every one offered his services.

---

[1]*Vermaho*—Rio Verme'jo, a tributary of the (South) Canadian River heading at the boundary line of Taos and Colfax counties, New Mexico, and flowing southeast.

CHAPTER X

El Rio de Las Animas

It was in the afternoon of the next day, that the party was started, consisting of twenty-three men. Bransford was in charge of the seventeen employees, and the wagon; the other five were free. One was Lucien Maxwell,[1] a hunter to Fremont's expedition in 1842, a resident of the valley of Taos, and a son-in-law to Judge Beaubien (Narcisse's father).[2] Manuel Le Fevre Lajeunesse and Tom Boggs; claimed a local habitation in Taos. They, very fortunately for themselves, happened to be on the opposite side of the mountain at the time of the massacre.

We crossed the river into *Nueva Mejico* at the fort ford, and followed the Santa Fe Trail, which kept the river bank. Five of us were mounted; the rest were to get animals at the Purgatoire, ninety miles distant. The object of the expedition, in which we were about to engage, was to travel as far as we could toward Taos; kill and scalp every Mexican to be found, and collect all the animals belonging to the Company and the United States.

---

[1]*Lucien Maxwell*—trapper, trader, foreman at Bent's Fort, with Fremont in California 1845, son-in-law to Judge Beaubien, on whose death he inherited 1,700,000 acres (the largest private estate in America). In later years he lived on the Little Cimarron near the present town of Cimarron, Colfax County, New Mexico. Known as "Big Nostrils" to the Cheyennes. He died poor, aged fifty-seven, at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, 1875.

[2]*Judge Carlos Beaubien*—a French Canadian of cultured blood, father-in-law of Maxwell and Ceran St. Vrain, making his home at Taos. Part owner of the Beaubien-Miranda grant, afterward the Maxwell estate. Appointed by General Kearny, one of the first three circuit judges of New Mexico. Died 1864.

Where the route diverged from the river at right angles, for Santa Fe, we camped. On the west, white chalk cliffs cropped out from the brow of the hills; the soap plant spread its green fan here and there, and dead-seeming sage bushes, harsh and stiff, were dispersed in irregular patches. No sun appeared; the chilling winds blew fitfully over the bleak plain, indicating an approaching snowstorm.

Most of the Canadians were those with whom I journeyed from the States. As they trudged along, chattering in French, overflowing with boisterous mirth, they thought not of the fatigue of walking. All were equipped with nor'-west fusils; with them, every prominent object in the road was *un sacre'* Mexican. When any one of them raised his fusil to fire, all stopped; some leaned forward on tiptoe; others drew back and sighted with one eye, and others again, with half-open mouths, in anxious expectation, would wait until the report of the gun rang out. Then all would start forward at a run to the target. If a good shot, a *sacre' bon* of approbation might be heard; if not they look carefully around, then examine the bushes twenty and thirty feet from the target, in tones of solicitous irony, condoling and praising the marksman with such exclamations as *un beau garcon; votre fusil tres bon, wagh! one Mexican he go ondare too, parceque you put de ball through son tete. Pauvre Mexican!*

The wagon contained one barrel of flour for provision, but no meat. Wood was scarce; with chunks from old camps around. we cooked. We sat by the coals, I talking to my Canadian friends of their trip to Santa Fe; they to me of Indians. Our short clay pipes were again and again filled before retiring. Bransford and I slept together. With blankets and

robes in a depression of the ground to keep off the wind, we made a snug bed.

An hour before daylight I awoke and raised my head from under the clothes (we always covered them, to keep off the winds), when a mass of snow filled the vacated pillow. Bransford, hearing me moving and talking to myself, told me with a grunt, to "be still."

"But, the snow is all under my head, and I'm as uncomfortable as possible."

"Ah boy! you'd better mind what I say; you get to fooling, and let the snow in on you, and you'll freeze. Take care old fellow," and off he dropped asleep.

I interposed my right hand between my head and the snow, until it was benumbed; then my cheek would be pillowed on the snow, until it was quite chilled. Lying on my right side, I dared not turn; my left hand could not be raised, and in that awkward position, Bransford's tantalizing snores constantly recalled me to a sense of my misfortune.

Some little effort was required to throw off the clothing, when getting up, by reason of the accumulated snow. A warmer covering could not have been made, as it effectually excluded the chill winds sweeping the hill behind us. The men, with their feet, found the wood and rekindled the fire.

What a sight greeted our eyes, on rising! The hills, ourselves, and saddles, were covered with the white drapery; bitter cold winds penetrated our clothes, while far off to the Northwest, (West) the twin mountains—*Las Cumbres Españolas*—glittered with snow. The mules were starving; for the scanty grass was hidden early in the night with the same frigid envelop which contributed not an atom to our personal comfort; and they stood trembling

over their picketpins, pricking their ears at any noise, without moving their heads.

From the impossibility of journeying with any degree of warmth, and the fact of the total absence of wood at the next two camps, and the probability of more snow, it was decided by the leaders, that we should stay in camp—choosing the lesser of two evils. Succeeding an unpleasant day of freezing on one side of our bodies, and scorching on the other, with our eyes red, blinking and weeping, by reason of pungent wood smoke, we rolled into our robes to get warm all over—a desideratum not attainable outside of them. We slept in the open air, the sky our canopy, as usual. Trouble and many inconveniences, both great and small, are invariably attendant on the exposed life we were leading; and though there were too many harsh ejaculations and expressive curses at the ill luck, for true philosophers, yet, from the frequent occurrence of mishaps, we learned to endure them as pains inevitable.

Here we had nothing but bread and coffee, which, in truth, is less nourishing and acceptable to us than meat alone.

We were again on the road, the mules no better for their stay. The pedestrians, comprising four-fifths of the company, had a laborious time walking through the snow, which, toward the middle of the day, melted, and rendered the ground slippery; but being Canadians was a sufficient guaranty for their acting with the proper spirit. Unpleasant matters will sometimes end; and, following a tedious day's tramp, we made camp on La Rio Timpa—a stream three or four feet in width, which, in pools and ripples, coursed along a tributary to the great Mississipi. The Timpa rises in New Mexico, and is the beginning of a series of streams, whose names are

much more euphonious than those in the American territory.

Leaving the wagon on the bank, we descended to the margin of the rivulet, to be free from the wind. The greasewood, so called from the crackling, eager flame in burning, afforded the only fuel; for the creek has ever been sparsely wooded, and General Kearney's division, en route to Santa Fe, used the little that was left. The above mentioned bush here grows to the height of four or five feet, starting from the ground in uniform wiry stems, which, by a quick, bending motion, can be broken. It makes a fire hot and sparkling, though of short duration, and to judge from the odor exhaled, contains a large proportion of resinous matter. The green bush burns as well as the dry, and is well designed to supply the traveler with fuel. The teamsters and soldiers on the Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe Trail are so improvident that not many years will pass ere the timber now standing will disappear.

Unfortunately for our coffee, the waters of the Timpa were so impregnated with salt as to be scarcely drinkable, though not so brackish now as in dry weather.

The fellows were strung close along with their blankets and robes, for sleeping; our mules hobbled, jumped among the grease-bushes, on the bluff above, for the sparse herbage; and by the expiring embers of the campfire sat Lajeunesse, without hat, which he never wore or possessed, puffing the dear pipe thoughtfully. A queer genius was this same Lajeunesse.[1] For years a *voyageur*, undergoing between the Platte and Arkansas even more than the usual hardships, he now was settled in the quiet

[1]*Lajeunesse*—probably a connection of Basil Lajeunesse, Fremont's favorite scout, murdered by Indians near Klamath Lake, on Fremont's third expedition, May, 1846.

vale of Taos, with a wife; but, like his brother Canadians, no better off in property than when, a young man, he first came to the Far West.

True to the mountaineer's characteristics, he was kind-hearted; for, of seemingly unsociable dispositions, he is generous, even to a fault. The fewness of their numbers seems to create an interchange of kindly feeling and the more one learns the nature of the hardy frequenters of the Rocky Mountain hunting grounds and beaver streams, the more will he be pleased. To judge by his frankness and reckless life, his sole aim appears to be freedom of person and speech in its fullest import. He considers his neighbor's "possibles" "on the prairie" with him—his own at their entire disposal; and, though coffee, sugar, tobacco, and other luxuries are high-priced, and often purchased with a whole season's trapping, the "black water" is offered with genuine free-heartedness, and the last plug of tobacco subjected to the rapacious knife of the guest, as though it were plentiful as the rocks around.

In consonance with the divine provision, the mountaineer deems it not good that he should be alone, and a visit to the Mexican settlement, or a trading tour to the Indian lodges, often results in his returning a quiet, contented Benedict, with, perhaps, the village belle to grace his solitary campfire, to mend his moccasins, or to spread the warm robes in the least smoky spot—the lonely pair as devoted in their love and as tranquil in their affection, in the midst of blood-thirsty enemies, howling wolves, and chilling snow, as if in the *salons* of a metropolis.

The easy manners of the harum-scarum, reckless trappers in rendezvous, and the simple, unsuspecting hearts of these mountain nymphs, cause him to be ever jealous of the attentions bestowed on his

wife; and often serious difficulties arise, in the course of which she receives at the hands of her imperious sovereign a severe drubbing with the knot end of a lariat, or no very light lodgepoling. Sometimes the affair ends in a more tragic event than a mere beating; not unfrequently the gay gallant pays the penalty of interference with his life.

One instance, partaking of the spirit of chivalry, was related to me by a witness. It was about two years before my visit, that, at the Pueblo (the mountineer settlement), a man suspected his squaw of cherishing greater affection for a handsome young fellow than for himself, and jealousy once fairly possessing him, no difficulty was found in sending a challenge. It was accepted; and on the succeeding morning, the two mounted their horses, rifle in hand, and faced each other on the plain, two hundred yards apart. During the momentary pause before the signal to advance was given, the younger one (and the transgressor), watched, with unmoved features, the bright sun looming up through the prairie to the east, then directed his eyes to the cold, gray spur of the Wet Mountain above. He gave one thought to his friends, a calm smile to his antagonist, gathered the bridle rein more tightly, and moved forward at an easy gallop, sitting as lightly as though he was out for a buffalo hunt. The simultaneous discharges rang out in the clear morning air; the wronged man turned in his saddle, to behold a riderless steed clattering wildly over the dry plain; and a puff of wind uplifting the smoke, he discovered, outstretched, the form of his opposer.

We were off again on our way. The small hills were thickset with a heavy growth of "greasewood" and sage, whose leafless, dead-appearing stems, protruding through the snow, gave a desolate, barren

cast to the scenery. On our left were high bluffs, their tops crowned with stunted pine and cedar. The black-tailed deer, said to browse there, incited me to a trial for meat; and, after much toiling, up and down indentations and around chasms, the summit was reached. Reining in the mule, with forefeet on the highest rock, I looked around.

Far off to the Northeast, (Northwest) was the well-known Pike's Peak, connected toward the south, by a low range, to the Wet Mountain,[1] so famed for the game within its very shadow; and, still further to the South, the White Mountain, out-topping all; and yet below it, the twin Wah-to-yah, one beyond the other, rising until the furthest floated as clouds, their white crests apparently touching the sky—the whole view including a stretch of one hundred and fifty miles. From my position to the nearest was ninety miles or more, yet such was the extreme purity of the atmosphere, any one peak seemed attainable by a few hour's ride. How simple, how imposingly great are these distant works of Nature!

As the men (shortly after) pointed out the different spurs, they expatiated more particularly on the Wet Mountain, with its lovely savannas; its cool springs and murmuring rills; its shady bowers of fragrant cedar and sheltered spots of grass; its grizzly bear and mountain sheep; its silky beaver and black-tailed deer, with wide-spreading antlers; its monster elk and fleet-footed antelope; its luscious plums and refreshing grapes; its juicy cherries, delightful currants, and other attractions, making it

[1] *Pikes' Peak*—near Colorado Springs, Colorado; *Wet Mountains*, range to the south of Canyon City, running through Custer County to Greenhorn Mountain at southwest corner of Pueblo County, Colorado; *White Mountain*, peak in Otero County, New Mexico; *Wah-to-yah*, the Spanish Peaks, near Trinidad, Colorado.

the hunter's paradise. Warming in their descriptions, Bransford and I, enamored with the joys of a hunter's life, made our plans for the coming summer.

We obtained a view of the effulgent, snow-piled Raton, at whose base our road runs. At noon, in came the hunters, with two antelope, scaring, as they descended the precipitous hills back to camp, a band of black-tail; who, clattering adown, with graceful motions, sped across the plain, ears and head erect. They are much larger than the common deer, and the skin is preferred for dressing.

The sight of meat, slung across the hunters' saddles, gave avidity to our decidedly carnivorous appetites, as we had been two days without meat. The repast finished, and washed down with strong coffee, the officiating butcherknives were wiped across our buckskins, with that deliberate languid air, which plainly proclaimed *jam satis.*

Tom wanted some bullets—in lieu of a ladle he cut a shallow place in a stick of wood—a hunter's expedient—where, laying in the lead and piling on coals, it soon melted.

Bransford's dog, whose fierce growls this night made me long recollect him, was of the Mexican shepherd breed, somewhat larger than the Newfoundland, with white, coarse, and long hair. This dog had often been seen around Bent's Fort, in company with wolves, on the watch for offal and other refuse. The men, wishing his skin, shot at him many times without effect. One morning early, the fort gates were opened, and the dog, cautiously passing the first portal,[1] entered the yard, and pulled at the bait of meat, starting with it for the prairie, but not before the gate was secured. The infuriated

[1]*Portal*—accent on last syllable, in the mountains. L. H. G.

dog, far more strong and savage than the largest wolf, turned on his assailants, who safely stood on the roof (which shelved toward the courtyard on all sides), with lassoes to noose him as he ran from one side to the other. He gnawed and bit several *riatas* in two, but at last they entangled him. He was fastened with a heavy chain, and secured in a bastion for two days; he continually made desperate, though ineffectual efforts to break loose, which severe straining drove the blood to his not yet clear eyes. He resisted all attempts at friendship, with growls of decided anger, until the third morning, when Bransford, walking up, without show of fear, patted him on the head. Thereafter he followed him every step, but allowed no one else to make friendly advances. Bransford and I occupied the same bedding; and, if I wanted to sleep first, he had to accompany me until safe between the blankets, for the faithful guardian always asserted his right to coil himself on Bransford's property, and growl at those who approached. His warm body was quite an acquisition to the comfort of our feet.

The wind rose at dark, driving the most of us down by the water's edge; where, sheltered by the high banks, we talked and smoked. The Canadians were above us, chattering in their usual glib style, when a sound like distant thunder filled the air. Down they rushed, all talking at once. We knew that it could not be thunder at this time of year, and the conclusion at which we soon arrived was, that a battle was taking place in Taos.[1] Although it is a long distance there by the road, and a lofty mountain intervenes, it is not more than thirty-five

[1]The assault on the Pueblo de Taos was begun on the evening of February 3rd, 1847. The fight ended next day in complete victory for the American forces.

or forty miles in a direct line. It was a hazardous trip for us to venture so far into the Mexican territory with no knowledge of affairs at Santa Fe and elsewhere, except those of an alarming nature; and we knew too well the carelessness and paucity of the American soldiery. We felt the Mexicans to be an injured people, possessed of vindictive tempers, who would, with a prospect of success, and under the guidance of brave leaders, revolt and fight well.

We were apprehensive that a Mexican force had overpowered the Americans, at the Purgatoire (a day's ride in advance), and was on its way to Bent's Fort. Our position was anything but enviable. Maxwell, Le Fevre, Lajeunesse, and Tom were cast down, with thought of their families, who might, at that moment be subject to the lawlessness of the infuriated populace. It was a gloomy night to those who, in anxious wakefulness, passed the long, dark hours till morning.

On awaking, our spirits revived with the appearance of a happy sun; and, being thawed enough to raise a laugh and smoke a pipe good-humoredly, we hitched up and rolled over the prairie in earnest haste.

Now, although at night all the extra clothing was required, as protection from the piercing winds, toward noon the heat was quite uncomfortable, and we encamped, after a long and warm drive, through a waste barren, save for an occasional stalk of cactus and scattering plants of the pamilla, from under whose sickly-green leaves loped awkwardly large gray hares. We stayed in camp, without water, for the oxen to rest; and while waiting with thirsty impatience in the shade of the wagon, we saw advancing from the direction of the Raton, an object, which was immediately pronounced a grisly bear. At the

startling announcement, every man rose quickly to his feet, gun in hand, to encounter the unwelcome visitor. But the bear proved to be a worn-down ox with U. S. stamped, in seared letters, on the left foreshoulder. The beast, though not grisly by nature, was grizzly with age and hard work; his sharp bones nearly protruding through the lifeless-looking skin. He was, no doubt, journeying the prairie trail, on home intent, to the land of fodder and tall grass —the Platte purchase, in Missouri; and how the poor thing came this far without being hamstrung by rapacious wolves, in a wonder. We, with self interest at heart, detained the homesick youth, and that afternoon drove him, with many a harsh "*sacre*'," and "wo-ha-a," along the same road he had just languidly traversed; this time, with his head bowed in submission to the galling yoke of servitude, no more to see his land of promise but in dreams, while chewing the cud of hunger and disappointment.

Toward evening we came to a canon, or inclosed creek, with bluffs forty, fifty, and even eighty or more feet in height. A diminutive streamlet trickled along the uneven bottom, in places disappearing, to reappear after a dark passage under the flat stones, to the brackish Timpa, thereby constituting the headwaters of that insignificant stream.

A camp, known as the Hole in the Rock—so called from the pools of water in the dry channel—was our resting place for the night; the huge, detached masses lying around, the thick groves of cedar, and the shelving ground, formed a good stopping place, but in our present state of insecurity, somewhat undesirable. We fixed ourselves according to fancy, built cheerful fires, drank plenty of the mean water, ate considerable of the slim stock of poor provision,

and smoked frequently, conjuring up, in the wreaths of strong smoke, as they ascended, shapes both blessed and *au contraire.*

The fires grew low; all were in bed but poor Maxwell and Lajeunesse, both too uneasy to sleep for thought of their homes; when we were startled by the bark of dogs and the almost simultaneous rush of Bransford's hound from my feet. What a thrill dashed through me! The men sprang to their feet, and ran from the fire in every direction, and I, following suit, *cached* myself behind a large stone, with ready rifle. Everyone was in the bushes, ready for the attack, in a moment from the time the dog barked, though not a shout of warning was heard from any of us. We reconnoitered, now with faces flat to the ground, to listen for footsteps, now dashing through the bushes. After a quarter of an hour, we ventured to return. Guards were set and continued through the night. What a train of new thought does an affair like this bring! The anxious state of suspense, the strain of the eyes in the endeavor to penetrate the Cimmerian darkness, the dodging behind rocks and trees, and the stealthy crawl of the older Indian fighters, combined to work up to a greater tensity our already high-strung feelings.

The following morn, ere the mists were fairly dispersed, we were again in our hard saddles, trotting down the little hills and walking up the elevations in the same old way. A new variety of cactus appeared; round stems covered with innumerable sharp spines, being the peculiarity. When dead, the spines can be broken, and the main stem used barely to boil a cup of coffee, or cook a piece of antelope meat, for the heat is but of short duration. The pamilla here dots the plain, its bayonet-like leaves diverging from the center, as rays; and looming up

in the ever-distant and receding mirage, in increased proportions, was often supposed to be a deer or horse, until a change of position dispelled the idea. We came in sight of the groves of dead cottonwoods, on the Purgatoire, by noon; and, diverging to the right of the trail, took a short cut for the camp of United States teamsters, whom we expected to find in a bend of the stream. The animals sank up to the fetlocks in the loamy bottom soil, and stumbled more than once in the numerous gopher burrows, or shyed around the prairie dog hillocks, and continually pricked their ears at the lively chirpings of the well-fed inhabitants.

Las Cumbres Españolas were now to our right, but a few short hours' ride distant; to our left, was the long descried Raton Peak, which, though smaller, from its proximity seemed more towering than its superior on the opposite side of the valley—the Spanish Peaks.

We traced with the eye the sinuosities of the Purgatoire, by the cottonwoods on the margins, with abrupt cliffs, and alternate prairie, far up to the mountain gap, whence it emerged. Manuel Le Fevre pointed to us the route which he, with a party of *Ciboleros*— buffalo hunters—years ago, came from *El Ville de Taos*, on the search for buffalo. He spoke of the deep snows in which they ran the noble animal, with lance and bow, and of going up in the neighborhood of the Peaks, where they found great numbers, killing enough in two days, to load their large train of packmules. In one race, he lanced three, and two of the *ciboleros*, five apiece.

The fine hunting grounds, and the pleasures of the chase, he dwelt upon with commendable fervor. "*Mais sacre',*" said he complainingly, with a suppressed heave of the breast, "les Americans, dey go

to de Missouri frontier, de buffalo he ron to de *montaigne;* de trappaire wid his dam fusil, he follow to de Bayou Salade, he ron again. *Dans les Montaignes Espagnol,* bang bang! *toute la journee! toute la journee!* go de *sacre' voleus.* De *bison* he leave, *parceque* de fusils scare im vara moche—*ici, la,* all de sem—*sacre'!"*—and while telling it, he worked himself in a great heat, as if the prairie and mountain peaks were made exclusively for Frenchmen and *ciboleros,* through which to chase buffalo in yelling barbarity forever.

We found the United States teamsters encamped on an elevation above the creek, strongly fortified with wagons, placed in the form of a hollow square, and a ditch and breastwork dug on the inside, behind which to fight. A few volunteer soldiers, who fled from the ranch at the same time Bent's employees left, were here encamped; they and the teamsters faring well on government rations, of which there were fifty or more wagonloads, and doing nothing but herding their oxen, in momentary expectation of a Mexican army to come sweeping down the mountain, and, amid the blasts of trumpets, and the roar of *escopets,* take them unwilling prisoners to the mountains beyond *El Rio Grande del Norte.*

We made camp in a small grove of dead cottonwoods, sheltered in the rear by a gentle hill, and surrounded by long bottom grass. We were as far from the teamsters as safety dictated, for the never satisfied inquisitiveness of the government men was unbearable. Some soldiers of Captain Fischer's artillery company were here. They, too, left the ranch, driving with them large droves of horses and cattle, belonging to the United States and Bent, St. Vrain & Co. When we claimed the company's (B & St. V.'s) animals, they murmured and disputed much, in

which the teamsters sided with them. They endeavored to secrete the most valuable in a distant valley; but, through our vigilance, they were found and brought back to camp. Hard words were uttered, and anger engendered on both sides. Not a few of our men were for open war. Numerous were the curses showered on the "Neds,"[1] by the mountain men of our party; and, still more frequent, the *sacre's, cochons, enfans des garces,* etc., hissed between the voluble lips of the Canadians, for their hatred was of the deepest dye toward these unfortunate wights, so far from the "land o' corn dodgers"—Missouri.

On the 11th, a fall of snow covered the ground a few inches in depth. Toward night our party was increased by the arrival of Sublette,[2] an old *compañero,* accompanied by Bill Garmon and Fred Smith, both clever fellows. They had ventured from the States, with the United States express, this inclement season of the year, bringing with them the news that General Wool had been ordered to join General Taylor, and that forty thousand men were enrolled for Mexico.

We now felt badly indeed—Doniphan's[3] regiment was in Chiahuahua, with no force to support it, and its certain defeat would give the Santa Feeans additional courage. A month had passed since Gov-

[1]*Neds*—Among many farmers, pork is familiarly called "Ned," and as pork forms a principal portion of the government rations, the United States employees were so termed, by the mountain men, in derision. L. H. G.

[2]*Sublette*—not William nor Milton Sublette, both of whom were dead at this time.

[3]*Doniphan, A. W.* (1808-1887)—lawyer, politician, soldier, hero of the battle of Sacramento. Wool and Taylor were, with Kearny, chief in command of the American forces in the Mexican War.

ernor Bent was murdered, several expresses had been sent from this side into New Mexico, but none had returned. Our position, more than a hundred miles in the Mexican territory, was unsafe.

CHAPTER XI

El Rio Vermejo

All were busied through the day in catching mules from the caballada, for a start toward the Valley of Taos, though the snow on the mountain above was forbidding. On the 13th of February, the younger portion of our company, mounted on mules, with a few pack animals, left La Barge and two more in camp with the wagon, to follow on the receipt of orders from Bransford. We bade a gay farewell to the Purgatoire encampment, and, leaping the narnow stream and spurring the rejuvenated mules, gained the old trail; when, after a series of hill and dale, we turned to the left and commenced the ascent of the Raton Pass![1]

The route was up a steep valley, inclosed on either side by abrupt hills covered with pine and masses of gray rock, our course now along the points of hills, now in the rough stony bed of the creek itself. The sparkling, flitting waters, leaping and foaming against the mules' feet, now gliding under large flat stones, and now reappearing, bounding impetuously down the uneven flinty bed, mingled itself with the pure stream *La Purgatoire,* hundreds of feet below. As we ascended, the scenery partook of a bolder, rougher cast.

Towards four o'clock we, fatigued with the incessant climbing, spurring, and walking, came to a valley gently sloping to the summit of the pass on the West, and rising on the East immediately by a continued succession of acclivities and terraces to

[1]*Raton Pass*—the pass over the mountains, between the present towns of Trinidad, Colorado, and Raton, New Mexico, on the old Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail.

the bare cliff, which, overlooking the country for leagues around, is known and designated as the Raton Peak—a familiar landmark to the trappers and traders.

The packs were deposited on the ground, and the mules, with trailing lariats, quietly continued, single file, further up the nook, where, gradually diverging on the wayside to crop a stray bunch of grass, they busied themselves in feeding.

Dry sticks were gathered, water was brought, and so far on the "community system," with provision and work in common, we progressed to our utmost satisfaction. A lookout was placed a hundred feet above to notice the approach of friend or foe.

After eating, Bransford, Maxwell, and I took our guns to relieve the guard. The side of the mountain from which we kept watch declined toward the western horizon; as we lazily lay on the crispy, brown grass, sheltered from the cold winds, the waning sun shed its warm rays upon us and pervaded the air with a subdued mellow luster. White fleecy clouds, tinged with rosy hues, flew across the view, and between the ethereal mottling was seen the placid blue.

Below, beyond the low range of mountain, was the valley—*Rio de las Animas* or River of Souls—and to the further extremity of the great depression, uprose the peerless snow-wreathed twin peaks *Las Cumbres Españolas,* the first of the Sierra Blanca, guardian spirit-like, keeping constant vigil over the western plains; watchers of the fierce Indian skirmishes 'neath their shades; quiet lookers-on of the army which a short time before had passed this point and, by mere force of simple granduer, inspiring a sentiment of friendship and protection in the breast of the lonely trapper, who, in momentary danger of losing

his scalp, builds his little fire, cooks his meat, and smokes his pleasant tobacco, not without first offering to the towering crests the mouth of his pipe, and the freely given homage of the first and most honorable whiff.

This is the acme of life. With fat, sleek mules, plenty of provision and tobacco, the undisturbed possession of our scalps in doubt, we traveled and camped, always on the alert and ready for any emergency, caring little for foe, not keeping guard; for a mountain man is supposed to have his ear open always to impending danger. In the present case, however, we had a guard, for the purpose of intercepting the express from Santa Fe, which we might reasonably expect.

After coffee, the mules received their packs; the riding animals, ready saddled, stood while the owners, with lariat ends in their hands and the rifle held between the legs, raked out coals from the smoldering fire to light a pipe preparatory to starting.

The summit of the ridge was reached after an hour's toil; and, stopping a moment for the fatigued animals to blow, we rapidly descended. The immense precipices of bare rock and earth, the confusion in which nature seemed involved, caused all to remark the forbidding aspect on the Canadiano side of the summit. At some steep hills, near the pass terminus, we picked our way over a road, which, in verity, might be termed rough. Pine trees interfered with the free use of the whip; large rocks obtruded their rude fronts in the tortuous road; one "wo-ha-a" too many, or a "gee" too few, here, endangers the safety of the unwieldy teams and burdens. The debris of wagons, such as broken felloes, loose tires, and tongues snapped short off, showing

unmistakable signs of mismanagement, and told plainly that "government" was a loser in the Raton Pass.

Once more on the plain, rapid travel gave place to the late tiresome mule wriggling; and at noon the saddles were pulled off the warm and thirsty animals under a cottonwood, on the banks of El Rio Canadiano, at this point a glassy, snow-fed streamlet, fifteen feet in width.

On crossing the stream, Maxwell, who had heretofore stayed with the crowd, kept some distance in advance as scout. We were strung carelessly along, when he, jerking his mule around quickly, spurred her in a gallop, and diverged from the route, at the same time motioning to us to ride *a la Comanche*—with our bodies so that nothing is seen on the opposite side, but part of the leg with which, and the heel of the same, we held on to the saddle cantle. There was no hill, but the gradual rise of the ground served to conceal any object approaching from the other side. We were quite excited, thundering along at full speed, able to sweep the ground with the free hand, our rifles ready to jerk up to the face, not knowing whether the run was from Mexicans, or a band of Utahs, or Apaches, or whether we were trying to surprise a party ourselves. But too well versed were we in Indian warfare, through practice or hearsay, to question at such a time, or to utter any noise except, indeed, a Canadian's impatient *sacre' diable* to his shying mule, or a smothered curse from a less conscientious American.

On making the rise, we espied a man unconscious of our proximity, going at half speed on one horse, and leading another; but so soon as he caught a glimpse of the foremost hat, away he lashed his animals in a full run. With wild yells, we straightened

in the saddles, and, with the report of two or three fusils, in the hands of as many half-frantic Frenchmen, we charged after him, endeavoring to escape; but seeing that it would be of no use, he fired his gun in air, in token of submission, and rode slowly toward us. It was Haw-he, an Indian, belonging to George Bent,[1] now on his way to the fort with the joyful news, that Col. Price had marched into Taos at the head of two hundred and fifty men and, in battle, had killed two hundred Mexicans and Indians and had bombarded and knocked down the Indian walled town of the Pueblos de Taos. On mentioning that Mr. St. Vrain commanded a company which did considerable service, cheers of exultation burst from us again and again. The Moro[2], another town, was razed to the ground and several thousand dollars' worth of grain burned. The Mexicans fled to the mountains, but being pursued, several prisoners were taken.

As Haw-he spoke American in broken sentences only, our information was gained through the services of our Taos companions.

Said he, "I see you come on de *caballos* (horses), and de *mulas* (mules) *poco tiempo* (swiftly)—me tink you los Utes (Indians),[3] *caraho;*—me hair gone —me rubbed out (killed), but *quien sabe el caballo colorado esta bueno* (who knows but that my red horse here is good and fat?) Me be off *pronto* (at

---

[1]*George Bent* (1814-1847)—brother to William and Charles, born in St. Louis, married a Mexican girl shortly after 1841, friend of F. P. Blair, Jr.; he had two children. Died at Bent's Fort of consumption; buried at Fort, but afterward reburied in St. Louis.

[2]*Mora*—county seat of Mora County, on headwaters of Mora River, New Mexico.

[3]*Utes*—important Shoshonean tribe, formerly occupied entire Central and Western Colorado, and part of Utah, as well as part of New Mexico. Now in Utah and Southwest Colorado.

once); you fire de carabine, den I fire—me no want *nada* (nothing)." Maxwell knew from experience that no prairie traverser will permit a body of men to approach him for fear of undergoing the painful scalping operation; only by surprising this man, we would be sure of him. Bransford, hastily writing a few words to our men at the Purgatoire to come on, sent Haw-he on his way.

The animals were watered at dark, and, pushing on, we stopped at a hill, amid groves of *piñon*. In honor of the late victories, we made a blazing pine fire, which cast a strong light for miles around. Heretofore, we had been careful, having but small fires, sufficient only for cooking; though now there was as much danger as ever from the marauding bands of Mexicans and Pueblos in the mountains near. The most gratifying result of the intelligence was the satisfaction to our Taos friends, to learn the safety of their families.

Without breakfast, or other solace, we saddled our mules for the Vermaho[1] (Vermejo) ranch, one of Bent, St. Vrain & Co.'s herding establishments. In an hour's ride, a hill, rocky and sterile, save a few stunted pines, presented itself, which overlooked a valley a mile in width, devoid of trees or bushes, and carpeted with brown bunch or grama grass. On either side of the dale rose mountains precipitous and rugged, presenting a wilderness of verdure; to the North, a high spur jutting out in the vale, and tapering to a well-defined point, clad and shaded by the everlasting pine, stood in softened relief; the narrow nooks on either side were dark and cool with the somber shades of the forest above, and around and toward the further extremities of which, herds

[1]*Vermejo Creek*—heading on line between Taos County and Colfax County, New Mexico.

of sleek, fat, bright-spotted cattle ran bellowing on our near approach.

In a recess of the mountain, completely sheltered from the chill winds and at a sufficient elevation to command a view of the animated plain below, was the site of the *rancho*. As most persons, probably, out of Mexico, understand but vaguely its definition, a description will be essayed. First, an eligible site for wood, water, shelter from the winds, and a full view of the herds, is chosen; then the adjacent aspen, or pinyon groves, furnish two forked poles, which are generally driven upright into the ground, as far apart as occasion requires, with about four feet visible. A pole is then laid from one fork to the other, and other small ones, seven or eight feet in length laid, the smaller ends on the cross pole, the butts resting on the ground. On top of these are spread raw hides of beef, and the skins of game, and under the frame the soft ends of the pinyon and cedar branches are spread to the depth of a foot or more. On top of that deerskins are laid, and then the bedding surmounts that, which, altogether, makes a springy mattress, equal to the best "hair" or "moss." In front, is the blazing pine fire, and at one side, a small stick driven in the ground, an inch or two of the branches remaining, on which the tin cups are hung when not in use. A short distance beyond is a pen of logs and brush in which the *caballada* is driven, when an animal is wanted.

This constitutes a New Mexico *rancho*, where the herdsmen of the poorer class stay, far remote from their homes, living for months on *atole* (thin mush of unbolted flour), or perchance, a deer or antelope, which they have been fortunate enough to kill, and performing severe and dangerous duty; exposed to the rains, the winds, the sleets, and snows; liable at

all times, whether in the gray of morning or the shades of evening, the bright glare of noonday or the dark hours of the howling night tempest, to the incursions of the numerous fierce, savage tribes, whose visits from the Mexican mountain glens are the immediate precursors of bloodshed and death. These perils do they endure, always in thought, and too often indeed, in fact for a small compensation, ranging from four to eight dollars per month, frequently payable in dry goods and other imported articles, at exorbitant prices.

The *rancheros* generally have no firearms; but, in lieu, a bow and quiver of arrows. With saddle, lasso, *hojas* and *ponche*—corn shucks and tobacco—they seem content to lead this desultory life. They are always in the saddle, and a *ranchero* has the rare faculty of making the unhappy quadruped he bestrides, if there is the least life in it, answer his purpose, by means of murderous spurs, the rowels of some of which measure five inches in diameter.

Manuel Le Fevre, Maxwell, and Tom Boggs left for Taos. The rest made camp by the ashes of the old ranchfire; and, shortly after, the band of cattle which had been driven up, startled with the report of one of our rifles, ran to the mountain again, leaving one of their number stretched on the ground. With the aid of a half a dozen scalpknives, its skin was stretched on a poleframe, the meat hung on a pinyon tree near, and ere the warmth of vitality had passed away, sundry pieces of tenderloin and fat links of *boudin*, hastily browned by the quick pine blaze, had glided down the grease-hungry throats of the independent party at the Vermaho ranch.

The following morning, Bransford started with

two men for the Poinel ranch[1] (also one of Bent, St. Vrain & Co.'s), three or four hours' ride distant. I accompanied them. Each one tied a piece of beef to the saddlestrings, for our only provision. Our course lay along the foot of the mountain; every step, in crossing from one point to another, disclosed quiet, lovely vales, on whose grassy undulations reclined herds of clean, well-fed cattle, and droves of dusky-colored, gamboling deer and antelope; who, on our approach, started forward, and with graceful bounds retreated into the fastnesses of the almost impassable barriers of rock in the background.

A large bird, soaring from its eyrie in the crag far above, denoted the name of the great depression—the Eagle Park. The low, level prairie, with its salt marshes and solitary stalking game, stretched far away to the Southeast, its monotony somewhat relieved by the mirage into which it merged. In the direction we were traveling, the Senegee Mountain[2] rose before us, snow-clad and overshadowed with a drapery of mist; and, from its side, a long line of smoke from a signal fire trailed upward reminding us of the Apache—no reliable friend to the American. Turning in our saddles, we beheld the Raton Peak, and many minor ones to the southward, heaped with gathering snow.

We crossed the Cimarone,[3] a rushing limpid, stream, issuing forth from the yawning mountain gorge, foaming and tumbling over the rocky channel, and imparting additional cheerfulness to our al-

[1]*Poinel ranch*—probably on Ponil Creek or near Ponil Park, Colfax County, New Mexico.

[2]Corruption of Sandia Mountains?

[3]*Cimarron*—the Little Cimarron, a small stream flowing past the town of Cimarron, Colfax County, New Mexico, tributary to the (South) Canadian River. Not the large stream flowing through Kansas and Oklahoma.

ready live spirits; for the Indian boy (Haw-he) had told us much to quiet our fears. Another half hour brought us to the Poinel Creek, where we found a *caballada* of mules and horses, bearing the brand of B., St. V. & Co., and that of "U. S." A mounted *ranchero*, on guard, at first afraid but finding who we were, directed us down the creek a half mile to a party of five more, all sent from Taos by Señor San Bran (St. Vrain) to herd the flocks, etc. The *Majordomo*[1] was an intelligent looking Mexican in a blue roundabout, leather pantaloons, and peaked oilcloth hat. Between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand was held the universal accompaniment of this olive-complected race—the shuck *cigarillo*. All were extremely polite through habit and through fear, as Colonel Price had given them quite a fright. To our inquiries, their answers were invariably ended with *"señor, si señor"*—sir, yes sir."

With a portion of their unbolted flour, or *"atole,"* and our beef, we made an excellent dinner. After chuck, and some horridly pronounced Spanish with the *rancheros*, we remounted for a grand cattle hunt. By night the small drove was augmented to hundreds.

Shortly following the sunrise next morning, we, with many a "heh-hep-ya" urged the scattered drove in a walk down the Poinel, where it debouched into the Cimarone. A band of deer, roused from their rest in the long grass at the junction, gave opportunity for a flying, though unsuccessful shot. A mile below the mouth, we camped in a sandy, weed-grown bottom near the wagons, which had been left in the flight by Frank De Lisle. They were much injured by the rapacious Guerillas in obtaining the iron rods.

[1]*Major-domo*, pronounced ma'yor-do'mo—foreman. L. H. G.

Friendly relations and a perfect understanding having been established between the *Rancherhosses* (as one of the men facetiously called them) and us. Bransford sent our two men back to the Vermaho for the main party and all the cattle; he and I stayed with the Mexicans, to pass the three most miserable days yet recorded. Our meat gave out during the first twenty-four hours, leaving us dependent on atole for sustenance. The camp was in a sandy spot; fitful gusts of wind spend their petty fury against our shrinking bodies, filling our eyes, noses, and hair with the gritty particles, and a light fall of snow made the ground and air uncomfortable and chill.

My worthy fellow sufferer had a wiry, whitish-red beard. As we sat by the few sticks, once on fire, but now smoking and blown out by the strong wind, hungry and disgusted with the flour mush, eyes red, and weeping with the smoke and sand, he would despondingly raise his rueful face from his knees, on which it rested twice as long as usual. Once, after a protracted, dreamy silence, he lifted his drooping head, tantalized by the elements, and, in a tone of vexation, exclaimed—

"Oh, darn the country anyhow! Don't you wish you were in the Planter's House?" and then we talked of the table, the pleasant streets, and the ladies; on contrasting those momentary hallucinations with our wretched condition, we were indeed unhappy.

One of the Mexicans—a dreamy looking fellow of twenty-two or three years of age—sang in a low, dulcet tone, in his own harmonious, flexible language, melodies of a plaintive, yet pleasing character; indicating by the expression of his countenance, the sentiment of the song. Sitting by the dim blaze of our campfire, enveloped in the *serape*, and uttering the strange words, his costume and complexion, together

with our situation in the wild mountain, impressed me with a vagrant fancy that he was a Spanish exile, bewailing the decay of his country's glory, and his own bereavement of friends and home.

Sometimes, when the weather was mild, and the trees and grass enlivened by joyous sunlight, we could see, up in the mountains, snowstorms raging furiously; and often, while the snow was beating mercilessly on our unprotected selves, the bright sun gilded the snow-clad peaks, as if in mockery of us poor mortals on the Cimarone.

CHAPTER XII

El Rancho

The men from the Vermaho joined us on the fourth day, and Louy Simonds, the indefatigable, to our supreme delight, supplied us with antelope meat. The baggage party arrived from the Purgatoire (the 9th), and all changed their habiliments for something cleaner, with the exception of myself and two others, who left Bent's Fort with no clothing but that on us —not even a spare shirt. Though my garments were, in all likelihood, soiled, after such a length of time, *il est tout le meme chose* (it is all the same), here. In this country of hardships, dress is of small importance; and although the mind is not concentrated on the lore of the past and present generations, it is not the less employed; as the *voyageur* has to know locations; ascertain, by almost imperceptible signs, the presence of friend and foe; exercise skill in approaching game, and, when so unfortunate as to lose his animals, to resort to some expedient suitable to his emergency. Here, where the mind is stretched to its utmost tension, by reason of the continually impending dangers of starvation, thirst, or the wary Comanche, Arapaho, Digger[1] or Apache[2], his perceptive faculties are quickened, his judgment brought into constant use, and his courage daily tested.

On the 4th of March, all were busied in making a large corral in which to drive the stock, so as to count

[1]*Digger*—sub-tribe of Pi-ute Indians, of Southwest Utah, so called because they dug roots for food. Afterwards applied to most of the tribes west of the Rockies and south of the Columbia River; a term of opprobrium.

[2]*Apache*—a name meaning enemy, applied to a number of tribes of Athapascan stock in the Southwest. Here, Jicarilla Apaches, living in northeast New Mexico.

and send a report to Colonel Price, commanding the army at Santa Fe. Before the insurrection, one thousand head of beeves for the government forces, several hundred yoke of oxen, and four hundred and more horses and mules, bearing the United States brand, with a considerable number of each kind belonging to Bent, St. Vrain & Co., were here herded, by their employees, with the aid of a few soldiers. When the Mexicans rose in arms, and killed the Governor, a party of guerrillas was sent to this ranch, over the mountain, from the valley of Taos, the greater portion of the animals driven away, and the remainder scattered in all directions. The wagons were abandoned; the soldiers and employees fled toward the Arkansas, and everything within the influence, was involved in seemingly inextricable confusion. The Mexicans, however, were defeated; our hardy little spy party reached the Poinel and Cimarone, "charged" among the hills and valleys for cattle and horses, and soon order reigned on the east side of the Taos Mountain.

We drove the congregated herds into the corral, and Bransford and myself, on blank pages of my journal book, and with bullets hammered out and sharpened for pencils (for I had lost the pencil procured at the fort), noted the different brands, and the number, as the cattle were permitted slowly to walk out. We now stopped our depredations on Uncle Sam's flocks, with the prospect of lean deer and antelope, which meats, though palatable with the usual accompaniments of a well-conducted cuisine, were not so good, when cooked by an open fire, in a sandy country, with nothing but its own scanty gravy, and no salt.

We had true March weather; spitting, fuming, flirting, blowing, snowing, raining continually. We were so encompassed by mountains that the wind

came from no particular quarter any length of time. Several of the energetic made a half-face tent of a wagon sheet. To protect us from the wind, we shifted it three times during the day—no small affair—and, after dark, changed again. On arranging our robes comfortably within, a snowstorm in ungovernable rage burst directly in the mouth. This was too much for the men to bear patiently, and, with curses ranging from the lowest to the highest in the scale of force and acrimony, with the commingled, never-ending, ever-present *sacre'*, we hung blankets in front, which, in some measure, warded the unwelcome tempest from our beds. It was really amusing to listen to the Frenchmen swearing in their vernacular. For a while, *diables, virgins, sacre's,* etc., would roll out with the facility of voluble tongues, until, becoming quite excited, the more expressive and inelegant American oath would follow with all imaginable vehemence, and accompanying gesticulation.

A short distance from us was the shanty of the Canadians (for ours could not contain the whole party), pitched rightly, and its inmates snugly ensconced within; some reclining; a few cross-legged, with the pipe; others singing and talking away, full of life, merriment, and fat beef! What happy temperaments these fellows possess—rather too volatile, and easily depressed, but like confined watchsprings, they regain their former elacticity of spirits with the least freedom. My friend, Petout (the one who procured the water for me the thirsty night, on the route out), was here among the rest, as kind and polite as ever, which, I trust, was in some measure reciprocated.

From Pablo, one of the Mexicans, whom we retained (the others were sent home), I purchased *por un rial*—for twelve and a half cents—the skin of a

wildcat, which he, the day before, saw an eagle pounce upon. By dint of running and shouts, he made him drop it.

In an excursion one day, for ducks, on the Cimarrone, a few miles below camp, while lying in expectation for a flock to come floating with the current, my attention was drawn to the musical sound of gently falling water, which proved to be the stream running over a beaverdam. After a shot at the handsomely plumed mallards, I examined this specimen of animal ingenuity and skill, which extended from one bank to the other. The sticks composing it, from one to two inches in diameter, were laid parallel to the stream, and the interstices filled with mud and leaves. With teeth for saw and ax, the tail for hod and trowel, these enterprising creatures accomplish much for their own safety and convenience.

We were one evening lounging in camp, when an eagle, soaring with graceful gyratory motions, which grew small by degrees and beautifully less, settled with a proud flap of his wings on the topmost branch of a dead cottonwood, and in self-conscious majesty, viewed the setting sun, whose rays clad the trees and hills around with golden hues. *Ad interim,* I was cautiously approaching under cover of large trees and bushes, and, when ready, with steady aim, I pulled trigger. "What a vandal am I," rose in my mind, as the report rang out sharply; but the ball, speeding its aerial flight without harm, the magnificent bald-head unfolded his wings slowly, as if to retire at least with dignity, darted upward, and with a wild scream disappeared.

Carley McCarty and brother, "Ike," Santa Fe traders, arrived in advance of their main train, with an assorted load of commodities, such as alcohol, tobacco, etc., in hopes of "striking" advantageous trades

with our comfort-bereft party; and, a few mornings following, camp was enlivened by the sight of Hatcher's[1] comical phiz. He had been absent during the winter, with George Bent and company, in the interior of Mexico, on a mule-trading expedition with the Utah and Pimo tribes, who levy heavy contributions on the Mexican *caballadas*. These they trade to the whites. Hatcher had an inexhaustible fund of anecdote and humor, which kept his camp circle in a continual roar, and which rendered him always a valuable acquisition to any party. He was about the cleverest fellow I met; always cheerful, ready to hunt and do his duty; a good temper, with an occasional dash of impatience, quickly relieved, however, by a well delivered, hearty, though harsh exclamation; and an unerring shot. With a short "dudeen" in his mouth, he would sit cross-legged by the warm coals, scintillations of wit flowing from his lips, his mirth-provoking countenance contorted in mockery of the poor butt of his jests, his keen, gray eye half closed with inward enjoyment. He was the beau ideal of a Rocky Mountain man.

The company's mules were not in good flesh; so I lent Hatcher mine, to make the trip to Bent's Fort, one hundred and eighty miles distant. I commissioned him to get me three shirts, for my single one had been on my back nearly long enough. I have read that the Turkish ladies never apply water to their faces, for it tarnishes, in their estimation, the brilliancy of the complexion; somehow it so happened that myself and several others had not washed our faces, combed our Medusa-looking hair, or changed hickory shirts, since leaving Bent's Fort—forty-one

[1]*Hatcher*—An Ohioan, trapper, Bent's best trader, at one time foreman at Bent's Old Fort. Known to the Cheyennes as Freckled Hand.

or two days. Whether our complexions were improved or not, by the banishment of water, is not to be said; the beef grease and sand certainly excluded the browning effects of the wind. We concluded to take "von gran swim" in the creek; the beneficial effect of the hydropathic treatment was quite visible. Pulling off our shirts, and dipping them in the running stream, the objections were, in some degree, removed; with a double twist, they were wrung, and hung on bushes to dry, while we poor "sans culottes," kept in the warm sun.

Louy Simonds returned after an absence of several days, with the choice parts of a wild Mexican steer. It is the opinion of those who have eaten beef fattened on the bunch (festuca) and grama grasses, that the meat is nearly as good as buffalo. In my own experience, both surpass the beef of the States. Yet between the two (mountain beef and buffalo), the latter has the preference.

Our camp became old and dirty, and we moved further up the stream, where, in a grove of blighted cottonwoods, we once more settled down. McCarty's camp was a few steps distant. Greenwood, who has been mentioned before, stayed with him.

Two days after the removal, the *caballada* was driven up. Six mules roped, and the same number of men mounted on them, went to the Springs a few miles distant, to tend a large drove of cattle. Herding is not arduous duty. The keepers merely have to ride two or three times a day to collect the stragglers; except that, in storms, which are of frequent occurrence, there is much trouble and vexation of spirit. Nevertheless, one is naturally impressed with a feeling of loneliness, greatly increased by the knowledge of the proximity of marauding bands of refugee Mexicans.

The Canadians reported several cows, with their calves, among the beeves. The thoughts of milk roused our drowsy camp to alacrity, and after considerable spirited chasing on the part of our Mexican, Pablo, seven calves were lassoed. We hastily constructed a pen to hold them, and the dams then gave little trouble. All the pans, kettles, and tincups were put in requisition. The cows were milked from behind, instead of at the side, with their heads drawn up to a wagon-wheel, with hind-legs tied, and fearfully rolling eyes, they looked quite different from the patient, chewing "Suke" of the American farmer.

How we feasted! A pot of rich milk was put on the fire, and when it boiled, the ground coffee was poured in, staying for a moment on top, to contrast the more strongly with the foamy fluid, until it sank; while we stood around, watching with eager eyes the grains as they were thrown to the surface by the ebullition. It was splendid!

Grizzly bear are plenty in this vicinity. Two years before this time, Hatcher and Boggs built cabins near this, with the intention of farming. To protect their corn from these bold depredators, they erected scaffolds in the fields, from which secure position they could fight off the marauders from the crops. A combination of unfavorable circumstances induced them to abandon their agricultural project, and the bears now roam unmolested through the deserted ranch.

One day a party of horsemen were seen coming toward camp at full speed; who, on a near approach, were found to be a band of thirty well-formed, good-looking Utahs. General Kearney effected a treaty with the nation; but they are, in common with all savage tribes within my knowledge, friends when weakest, enemies when strongest. So frequent is their intercourse with the New Mexicans,

with whom they are usually at war, that many of the Utahs speak the Spanish-Mexican language.

McCarty's wagon still remained with us; and as the men's drafts on Bent, St. Vrain & Co., were good, cards and liquor passed freely. The latter is straight alcohol, but, mixed with water, it constituted a passable beverage, its principal use being, in mountain parlance, to "make drunk come."

Fitzgerald and Bill Garmon came from Taos, with a report of the excitement occasioned by the numerous arrests. Fitz was a private of Captain Burgwin's company of dragoons at the battle of Pueblo de Taos. When the breach was made in the church, whither the enemy had retreated as a last resort, the dragoons attacked with bombs, holding the shells in their hands until the fuses were nearly burned, and then tossing them in to do their work of devastation. The first two Americans who entered the breach fell dead, the third was unhurt, the fourth killed, and Fitz was the fifth. He was a man of good feeling, but his brother having been murdered by Salazar[1] while a prisoner in the Texan expedition against Santa Fe, he swore vengeance, and entered the service with the hope of accomplishing it. In the fight at the Pueblo three Mexicans fell by his hand; and, the day following, he walked up to the *alcalde* (Tomasito) and deliberately shot him down. For this cool-blooded act, he was confined to await a trial for murder.

One raw night, complaining of cold to his guard, wood was brought, which he piled up in the middle of the room. Then breaking through the roof, he noiselessly crept to the eave. Below, a sentinel,

---

[1]*Salazar*—Brutal Mexican in charge of the prisoners of the Texan Santa Fe' expedition. He starved his captives, and shot down those whose injuries made them unable to keep up with the column.

wrapped in a heavy cloak, paced to and fro to prevent his escape; but when the guard's back was turned, he swung himself from the wall, and with as much ease as possible, walked to a messfire, where his friends in waiting supplied him with a pistol and clothing. When day broke, the town of Fernandez lay far beneath him in the valley, and two days later, he was safe in our ranch.

Our "hossguard" came hastily into camp one morning, saying that thirty of the "cavayard" were stolen. Mounting the few mules grazing around, we started in hot pursuit; but the trail led up a steep part of the mountain, rendering an attempt at rescue both unsafe and uncertain; so giving the Apaches or Mexicans the credit for a successful *coup* hunt, and binding on our hearts the proverb of "Prudence the better part of valor," we returned.

As the spring advanced, the sun's rays grew more genial, and green grass peeped from under the heavy tussocks of the past year's vegetation. The air, bracing and fresh, was tempered by the increasing warmth; no dew fell to dampen or make disagreeable the walking; and, in the heat of the day we, perfectly inactive, lay about camp fanned by the gentle zephyrs.

Hatcher, with Captain Jackson (company D, Price's regiment), his first lieutenant, and one private, arrived from Bent's Fort on the second of April. On the third they, with the addition of Louy Simonds and myself, jogged along at a quiet mule pace, for the pass, enroute to Taos. Two hours' ride brought us to the foot of the mountain, where, dismounting to rest, we permitted the mules to wander and nip the dried yellow blades of grass in the many crevices of the rock. The country adjacent was exceedingly rough and forbidding. Isolated buttes and abrupt

cliffs caused us often to turn aside; the ground was thickly strewn with fragments of coarse sandstone, and huge masses of scoriaceous rock thrown up as by internal convulsion, reared their flinty fronts. So remote is this region, and so incapable of production is the soil; except in the narrow valleys, that many years must elapse ere it can become attractive to the farmer.

The path up which we rode wound around rocks and under the shadows of beetling cliffs now facing and now with backs to the sun, its tortuous sinuosities and uneven steep surface causing the sure-footed mules to pant and frequently rest. At one side, stuck in the heavy stones, were several rude wooden crosses planted by the Mexicans during the descent on the ranch. When fear overcame their audacity, a prayer *en passant* was offered to the Virgin Mary, which commendable act of piety finished, they proceeded, much relieved, on their way, leaving the honored emblem of Christianity for some other consistent worshipper.

In the States, the smooth bark and slender branches of the aspen, with its glossy leaves, looked beautiful; but here the scene was one of barrenness, and the white-leaved aspen, springing from the ground bereft of verdure, and the cold gray rocks, with the mournful pine interlaced, induced other and sadder sensations. I even wondered how so spectral a foliage could ever have been admired.

At the side of the trail, at intervals of fifty and a hundred yards, were piles of stone, which, from their uniformity, excited our attention. Hatcher told us that years since, the Comanches, at that time warring with the Pueblos de Taos, sent a party over this mountain on a foray. To enable them to find their way back, in case the snow should cover the trail,

these piles were made. Admirable forethought; but their tawny hides not being arrow-proof, the scalps of the greater portion were swung aloft in the furious dance, to the booming sound of the Pueblo drum.

We rode over snow banks five feet in depth—occasionally breaking through. The air grew chilly as the sun declined; our exertions in walking up the steeps warmed us but little. On the summit, a level, bare spot, and a brackish body of water—El Laguna—presented itself—its margin grown with slime-covered sedge. Riding to the edge of a precipice, we saw the valley we had left that morning. Thousands of feet below, tall pines appeared mere bushes, and the Rio Rayado[1], a silver thread. Pursued with the eye, it was lost among the numerous hills, whence, after many windings, it coursed over the plain, a considerable stream, the channel marked out by trees on either bank.

Sheltered by an elevation of ground and a pine thicket in the rear, we encamped by a snowbank, from which was scooped the water for our coffee. The horses had been watered before sunset, while the melted snow ran in the path; they were left for the night in a sheltered grass spot, to luxuriate on festuca.

On leaving the *rancho*, Hatcher, Louy, and myself tied beef to the saddle-strings; the captain and companions had their rations. The blending of their salt with our fresh meat, was agreeable to both. From some pines we clipped with knives the soft ends of the boughs, and before the fire, in a depression of the ground, spread them down with blankets and

---

[1]*El Rio Rayado*—Creek heading near Black Peak, flowing east, in Colfax County, New Mexico. Town of Rayado same vicinity. Kit Carson once had a ranch there.

robes on top, making a couch whose ease repaid our trouble.

An old Mexican trudged up to camp after dark, who, when we hailed him to know his business so far from any place, replied that he was going to Señor San Bran's *rancho.* He ate some proffered meat and coffee, and, after rolling up and smoking a shuck *cigarillo,* coiled himself before the fire in his one blanket to sleep. A common person would have frozen with so slim an amount of covering, but *Valgame Dios!* these ranchers can undergo that which would kill a dozen respectable white men.

CHAPTER XIII

El Valle de Taos[1]

Though the wind was piercingly cold, Hatcher was up early, making a fire, "for," said he, "this hos is no b'ar to stick his nose under cover all the robe season, an' lay round camp, like a darned Ned; but," he added, in an undertone, as he looked to see if the government men were awake, "thar's two or three in this crowd—wagh!—howsomever, the green is 'rubbed out' a little. This child hates an American what hasn't seen Injuns skulped, or doesn't know a Yute from a Shian[2] mok'sin. Sometimes he thinks of makin' tracks for white settlements, but when he gits to Bent's big lodge[3] on the Arkansas, and sees the bugheways, an' the fellers from the States, how they roll thar eyes at an Injun yell, worse nor if a village of Comanches was on 'em, an' pick up a beaver trap, to ask what it is—just shows whar the niggers had thar brungin' up—this child says—a little bacca, if it's a plew a plug, an' Dupont[4] an' G'lena,[5] a Green River[6] or so, and he leaves for the Bayou Salade[7]. Darn the white diggins, while thar's buffler in the mountains. Whoopee!" shouted he to us, "are you for Touse? This hos is thar in one sun, wagh! Louy, the cavyard's out picking grass—half froze to travel."

---

[1] *El Valle de Taos*—The valley of Taos.
[2] *Shian*—Cheyenne.
[3] *Bent's big lodge*—Bent's Old Fort.
[4] *Dupont*—Powder; plew (French *plus*)—a beaverskin, best quality.
[5] *Galena*—Lead for bullets.
[6] *Green River*—Trapper knife.
[7] *Bayou Salade*—Salt Marsh, now South Park, Colorado.

We dispatched a cup of coffee, and, driving our shivering mules to camp, saddled and packed them—the captain and companions fixing their American saddles with a frail buckle and girth; while Hatcher and Louy first laid on their mules the half of a robe, and on that a bare Mexican tree, without pad, cover, or other appendage, save a few long buckskin thongs tied to the back part of the cantle, and a pair of huge, wooden stirrups dangling directly under—not forward—the seat. With an adios to the Mexican who, returning the salute, started for the rancho, we mounted.

The transition from the valley was sudden for us, in substantiation of which fact, our blue limbs gave irrefutable testimony. Gaining the summit of the hill, at whose base we had been sheltered from the fiercer blasts during the night, the animals would scarcely be persuaded, though subjected to severe digs of long-rowelled spurs, to face the wind. Words intended for each other were borne unheard along the breeze, which rushed down our throats, nearly stifling us. To walk was impossible. To ride was exceedingly unpleasant, but we were forced to retain the saddles.

While riding up a narrow path, toward the warmer part of the day, a small, reddish-gray squirrel, jumping nimbly from limb to limb in the bright sun it had left its winter quarters to enjoy, attracted our attention.

"Thar's a gone beaver," shouted Louy, as he discharged his rifle, though without effect, as the diminutive animal, disappearing among the swaying pine branches. "It's many a time this paw's held a forked stick, with an old nor'west fusil—one of dad's, that's 'under'—when his arm wasn't no bigger an' a beaver tail, to shoot at sich varmin as them (the squirrel).

An' when the old shootin' iron 'ud flash in the pan, I 'ud say—'Doggone the old thing; you ain't wuth a cuss' (I was afraid to swear then), but then, I would git as chargin' *fache* nor an old buffler an' out 'ud rip dam! Then this old hos would feel kinder like a sick beaver in a trap, or a 'cow' with a G'lena pill in the lights—the dark wasn't the place for me then, I tell 'ee; but this coon has 'raised har' so often sence, he keers fur nothing now. Mind the time we 'took' Pawnee 'topknots' away from the Platte, Hatch?"

"Wagh! if we didn't," chimed in the interrogated, "an' give on *owgh-owgh*, longside of thar darned screechin', I'm a niggur. This child doesn't let an Injun count a *coup* on his cavyard always. They come mighty near 'rubbing' me 'out,' 'tother side of Spanish Peaks—woke up in the mornin' jist afore day, the devils yellin' like mad. I grabs my knife, 'keels' one, and makes for timber, with four of thar cussed arrows in my 'meatbag.' The Paches (Apaches) took my beaver—five pack of the prettiest in the mountain—an' two mules, but my traps was hid in the creek. Sez I, hyar's a gone coon ef they keep my gun, so I follers thar trail, an' at night, crawls into camp, an' socks my big knife up to the Green River, first dig. I takes t' other Injun by the har, an' 'makes meat' of him too. Maybe that wasn't coups counted, an' a big dance on hand, ef I was alone. I got old Bullthrower, made 'medicine' over him, an' no darned niggur kin draw bead with him since."

Crossing a valley, a mile in width, with a stream calmly meandering through, we commenced the final ascent, here more steep and rugged than hitherto. Stopping at the summit for the animals to regain breath, a rapid descent for some miles lay before us. A spot of grass presented itself by a clump of wil-

lows, and on Hatcher's exclamation of "Hyar's for camp," we turned our mules to wet their mouths in the cool running water; and, with long trailing lariats, wandered in quest of grass. With a few dead willow twigs, fire was kindled, and while the coffee boiled, we reclined on out-spread saddle blankets in the warm sun, thoughtfully puffing "Old Virginia," from time-worn clay pipes. Partaking of the nectar-like Java—every drop worth its weight in "beaver" —we smoked, until Louy Simonds proposed that if we wanted to dance with the Mexican squaws that night, we'd better be making "tracks fur thar lodges."

"Wagh!" responded Hatcher, looking up from the wreaths of smoke he had been watching curling and melting around his lips, "this hos has been making medicine—good medicine—an' he's fur Touse tonight." *"Comme la va, señorita'!"* added he, in a gentle tone, rising to his feet, and bowing to an imaginary Mexican lady—*"comme la va, no cary por fundango?"* —"how do you do, Miss—wish to dance?" and, with a genuine war cry, he started for his mule.

With comparatively easy travel, and a more genial atmosphere, we were again journeying down the cañon de Taos; which, like the route passed over, has never been traversed by wagons—a mere mule path, difficult and dangerous. We saw where Colonel Price had entered the further end of the pass, on the march to fight the insurgents—the marks of the cannon and baggage wheels were still visible.

My sentiments were akin to the romantic that afternoon with my merry friends, who, with quick rifles, fired at trees for targets, or caused their voices to reverberate from the high walls of rock. The sighing of the wind—zephyr-like, bland and refreshing—

mournful yet pleasing—the pine-clad hills above, around and below—the mystery in which the customs of the present and the past inhabitants of this region have been kept, through paucity of knowledge or descriptive powers of visitors—the thoughts engendered by the perusal of Prescott's "Conquest," and Stephen's Central American researches, and the fact of traversing the same road along which the munitions of grim-visaged war were but a few days before transported, rendered strange my fancy, and gave my wandering imagination many a theme for instant, yet lengthy, discussion.

Ere long, the sun's rays were excluded by reason of our continual descent; turning a sharp corner of the tortuous path, we surprised two goatherds tending a large flock of the sure-footed creatures, browsing among the gray lichen-covered rocks, or perched on the crests of detached fragments, gently giving utterance to the peculiar bleat, as, with heads thrust forward, they snuffed our approach. With a passing *"Buenas le dai"*—"Good day"—to the flock keepers, who, abashed and timorous, quietly and reluctantly returned the salute, from under the shade of their weighty, broad-brimmed, leather *sombreros*, we kept on, oft riding in the pebbly bed of the rivulet, which by constant accession grew to a noisy brook. The mules, though not thirsty, stopped often to dip their noses in the laughing stream, as if to say—"We know good water."

Some hundreds of feet above, in the niche of a cliff, Hatcher pointed out the site of a large reservoir; we were too much wearied to attempt a closer inspection. The prevailing impression is that it was built by a people cotemporary with the Aztecs.

The mountain, at the pass termination, was quite bared of trees by the Mexicans; who, with axes and

patient diminutive burros—jackasses—clamber the steeps for fagots of the dry resinous pine. A train of these animals loaded look like walking brush heaps, so completely is the burro hid from view by the bulky wood.

On emerging from the cañon, the view expanded to a valley nearly circular to the casual glance, hemmed in by a snowy range, while El Rio Grande del Norte, a few miles distant, rolled between sandbanks to the southwest. The level plain below wore a cultivated, civilized aspect. Reposing quietly at our very feet, was the hamlet, *El Rancho*; to the west the village of *Ranchito*, and toward the northwest, *San Fernandez de Taos*, its walls, as well as those of the minor towns, mica lime-washed to a dazzling whiteness. To the northeast, at the base of a contiguous mountain, was the dismal *Pueblo de Taos*, but a few weeks since the scene of fiercest strife.

The brook, down whose channel we had kept the preceding few hours, was, at its egress, directed into a large *acequia* or ditch, and from that, in numberless smaller ones, through the valley, to serve in lieu of the grateful showers in which the American farmer puts so much dependence.

The first house we passed was a distillery, where the "mountain dew" of New Mexico—*aguardiente de Taos*, is made. Such is the demand that it is imbibed before attaining a very drinkable age, by both foreigners and residents, with great avidity.

A fiercely moustached native, with broad-brimmed glazed *sombrero*, and gay-colored *serape*, disposed in graceful folds on his lithe figure, and a woman with gray *rebosa* enveloping her head and shoulders, leaving unhid and peering through, her piercing black eyes, replied gayly to one "*Buenos le dia Señorita*"—"Good day, Miss." Hatcher and she entered upon a

colloquy, while the tired mules trailed slowly on with drooping heads and vacillating ears, seemingly too weighty for the thin necks to which they were attached.

The sun fast sank behind the western peaks, and groups of swarthy-skinned laborers lined the road on their way home, greeting us respectfully as we passed, with the accustomed salutations. To the left, a number of men, with implements of labor, were still at work on an *acequia*, under the supervision of the *alcalde*. Reaching the suburbs of Fernandez, I recognized a *ranchero*, driving before him a mule laden with shucks.

He exclaimed, as he doffed his hat—*"Comme la va, Señors, esta buen—ah Bonita!"* "How are you, Sirs—ah Bonita"—(to my mule). *"Señors, una fandango grandote, esta noche,"* his eye brightening as he spoke, *muy Señoritas bonitas."* "There's a big fandango to-night; a great many pretty ladies there too—wish to go?"

"Certainly we do," replied Louy, "'specially if thar's liquor on hand."

Passing some low, flat-roofed mud structures, several American soldiers or guard near, we met at every step gracefully moving women and *serape*-enveloped men, the shuck *cigarillo* between the lips of many; and turning to one side of the *plaza*, drew rein in front of a house, where were numbers of Americans talking and smoking. Fisher came forward, with his hand outstretched before reaching us, with a hearty "How are ye? I swar' you look tired; come in and take a 'horn'—a little of the *awerdenty*—come—good for your stomach!"

Mr. St. Vrain, at this juncture approaching, took me kindly by the hand, coupled with an invitation to his own house. Leading my mule by the bridle,

we crossed the south side of the plaza and entered a courtyard inclosed by high walls. A Mexican took Bonita, and pulling off the saddle, led him to a pile of shucks and corn.

I was ushered into an oblong, handsomely furnished room, with a fireplace in one corner, and the walls hung with portraits of holy characters, crosses, etc., showing the prevailing religion; and to furnish additional evidence, a *padre* (priest) was taking his *conge* as we opened the door. An introduction to Senora St. Vrain—a dark-eyed, languidly handsome woman—followed my appearance. The Mexican mode of salutation is to meet, and one arm of the gentleman or lady is thrown around the other's shoulder; then stepping back one pace, they shake hands, accompanied with the usual *"Comme la va."* But I did not understand this most cordial mode of greeting, and when the Señora sidled alongside, in expectation of the usual embrace, I thought how strangely she acted, and only extended my hand, saying in American, "How do you do?" Most assuredly, such a fashion with our ladies would meet with enthusiastic followers.

At supper, I sat at table and ate potatoes, for the first time in several months. A *fandango* was to be held that night, but upon my declining an invitation to attend, a mattress was unrolled from the wall, where in daytime it served as a seat, and I turned in between sheets. Yes, sheets! For months I had enveloped myself with blankets in the open air, pulling off no clothing but the blue blanket topcoat, which, with my saddle, served as a pillow, but now a change came over the spirit of my dream. A house, table, vegetables, and sheets—to say nothing of the

charming smiles of woman and the Taos *aguardiente.*[1]

Shortly after I lay down, the room filled with gay ladies, revelling in excess of paint and flaunting dress, and partaking of the favorite *aguardiente*, by way of support, against the fatigues of the *fandango*. I looked at them through my partially closed eyes, to notice more closely, without an imputation of rudely staring. The musical tone of their voices, uttering their sweet language, fell gently on my ears and as perception gradually failed, amid a delicious reverie I sank to sleep.

[1]*See Glossary.*

CHAPTER XIV

El Consejo[1]

At a late hour for a mountain man, I dressed by a blazing fire, although Señora St. Vrain and sister—a handsome brunette of some sixteen years—were in the room; they probably were accustomed by the "free and easy" manners of the valley to this liberty, which they themselves took an hour before. After breakfast, the ladies rolled up several shuck *cigarillos*, which they presented with smiles and a persuasive *"Señor?"* I did not refuse. The shucks are dried and cut in slips, one and a half inches broad by three in length; then moistened, to prevent splitting, by putting it in the mouth, and drawing out with compressed lips. The tobacco of the country—bland and fragrant—is sprinkled on one edge, and, with a sleight-o'-hand motion of the fingers, rolled up. The ends are pinched, to retain the contents. In the pocket is carried a roll of raw cotton the size of a common goosequill, bound with calico, which, with the flint and steel in every one's possession, is produced, and, with a dexterous blow, fire imparted from which the *cigarillo* is lit. A tin tube three inches long is fitted to the cotton, and when the shuck lights, the burning roll is drawn in the tube; and, by placing a finger on the end to preclude the air, the fire is extinguished, leaving a cinder to which the steel spark imparts its fire. Some use a silver, or even a gold tube; while the poor *pelados* have to content themselves with a tin one, or nothing.

Though smoking is repugnant to many ladies, it

---

[1] *El Consejo*—The Court.

certainly does enhance the charms of the Mexican *señoritas,* who, with neatly rolled up shucks between coral lips, perpetrate winning smiles, their magically brilliant eyes the meanwhile searching one's very soul. How dulcet-toned are their voices, which, siren-like, irresistibly draw the willing victim within the giddy vortex of dissipation! And these *cigarillos* they present with such grace, and so expressive an eye, so musical a tongue, and so handsome a face, that it was impossible to refuse. To use a Scotch phrase, *"it's na sae bad."*

I must say that to a superficial observer there is much romance in having a Mexican wife; but, were we to come down to sober reality, the affair would show forth in a different light. From the depraved moral education of the New Mexicans, there can be no intellectual enjoyment. The only attractions are of the baser sort. From youth accustomed to a life of servitude and vitiated habits, we look in vain for woman's true attraction—modesty—that attribute which encircles as a halo the intelligent, virtuous, and educated woman. Surely 'twas pardonable pride in me to notice, by contrast, the superiority of those of my own country.

Court assembled at nine o'clock. On entering the room, Judges Beaubien and Houghton[1] were occupying their official stations. After many dry preliminaries, six prisoners were brought in—ill-favored, half-scared, sullen fellows; and the jury of Mexicans and Americans—Chadwick, foreman—being empan-

---

[1]*Carlos Beaubien* and *Joab Houghton*—Circuit judges of New Mexico, appointed by General Kearny, when the civil government was set up in 1846. Narcisse Beaubien was the son of Judge Beaubien.

eled, the trial commenced. F. P. Blair, Jr.,[1] prosecuting attorney, was assisted by Wharton, a volunteer private, on furlough for the occasion. They had, no doubt, joined the ranks in hopes of political preferment on their return home, and the forests of Missouri may yet re-echo with Wharton's stentorian voice, proclaiming to his hero-worshiping constituents how he "fought, bled, and died" for his country's liberties—a recapitulation of all the bravado with which many of the military leaders of the discreditable Mexican war have been gulling the "sovereign people," since their return from their easily won fields of glory.

Mr. St. Vrain was interpreter. When the witnesses (Mexican) touched their lips to the Bible, on taking the oath, it was with such a combination of reverential awe for the book, and fear of *los Americanos,* that I could not repress a smile. The poor things were as much frightened as the prisoners at the bar.

It certainly did appear to be a great assumption on the part of the Americans to conquer a country, and then arraign the revolting inhabitants for treason. American judges sat on the bench, New Mexicans and Americans filled the jury box, and an American soldiery guarded the halls. Verily, a strange mixture of violence and justice—a strange middle ground between the martial and common law.

After an absence of a few minutes, the jury returned with a verdict of "guilty in the first degree" —five for murder, one for treason. Treason, indeed! What did the poor fellow know about his new

[1]*Frank P. Blair, Jr.*—(1821-1875), congressman from Missouri, 1856; major general of volunteers, U. S. A. 1864; U. S. senator 1871; in 1868 unsuccessful democratic candidate for vice-president. Close friend of Charles Bent.

allegiance? But so it was; and, as the jail was overstocked with others awaiting trial, it was deemed expedient to hasten the execution, and the culprits were sentenced to be hung on the following Friday—hangman's day. When the concluding words "*muerto, muerto, muerto*"—"dead, dead, dead"—were pronounced by Judge Beaubien, in his solemn and impressive manner, the painful stillness that reigned in the courtroom, and the subdued grief manifested by a few bystanders, were noticed not without an inward sympathy. The poor wretches sat with unmovable features; but I fancied that, under the assumed looks of apathetic indifference, could be read the deepest anguish. When remanded to jail till the day of execution, they drew their *serapes* more closely around them, and accompanied the armed guard. I left the room, sick at heart. Justice! Out upon the word, when its distorted meaning is the warrant for murdering those who defend to the last their country and their homes!

CHAPTER XV

San Fernandez

Every nation has some peculiarity of dress; and, although the New Mexicans and the States people are geographically so near each other, the marked difference in dress renders a notice of it proper.

The women (giving them the preference) do not wear bonnets, using instead the *reboza* or *mantilla* —a scarf of cotton and silk, five to six feet in length by two or more in width—which serves as covering for the head and body. So dexterous are they in its management, that in cooking or walking it is retained, forming a graceful and pleasing contrast to the bonneted and hooded civilized lady. A skirt is worn a trifle shorter than the present States fashion, so that it can hardly be called a dress; the figure, above the waist, is invested with a chemise, with short arms; but, so sparing were they of material, or so bound to follow unrelenting fashion, or through a desire to show their fair shoulders, etc., the chemises were too low-necked. The Cheyenne maidens, on the contrary, wore their buckskin sacques, fitting closely around the throat; but the graceful señoritas de Taos were pleased to make a more prodigal display, which, to unaccustomed eyes and taste, was uncomely, and in fact, satiating.

The men, generally speaking, wear pantaloons open on the outside seam of the leg, and lined with buttons, to fasten at pleasure; while underneath, a pair of white drawers is disclosed to view—a fancy colored shirt and vest, and an oblong blanket (of Mexican or Navajo Indian manufacture, the wool of which being hard-twisted, turns the rain effectually), with a hole in the center for the head. A tall,

peaked, oilcloth-covered hat of straw or brown wool and yellow *zapotes*—shoes—complete the costume. In one vest pocket are carried shucks, cut to the *ponche*—tobacco. The flint and steel have their place in the pantaloons pocket.

In front of many dwellings is a mud oven, in shape like a cupping glass, in which is baked the whitest bread it has ever been my fortune to taste. No bolting cloths are here used; and those wanting white bread sift for themselves. The hard bread, *biscoche*, is light, porous, and sweet—a perfect luxury with a cup of coffee by a mountain-pine fire. Probably, long-continued abstinence from all kinds of farinacious food influenced my judgment—but, without doubt, it would meet with favor at the Planter's House. On Mr. St. Vrain's table was the national dish—*chile colorado*—a compound of redpepper pods and other spicy ingredients; a hot mess at first; but, with the aid of *tortillas* (a thin, soft cake of flour and water, baked on a griddle), of which we consumed a great number—a new taste was soon acquired.

Many houses have windows or mere holes in the wall; and, in lieu of glass, large plates of mica are used, which serve the purpose well. The court, in front of each house, brings everything within a small compass, besides excluding thieves, except in case of a regularly burglarious attempt. From the outside nothing but bare, high walls are visible, thus allowing no scope for architectural display, and giving an antiquated, foreign air to the town, in the eyes of all from the States.

It was amusing to see the diminutive, long-eared *burros*—jackasses—slowly drawing themselves—one tired foot after the other—up and down the streets, munching bones and other refuse of the kitchen.

With noses trailing the ground, long lobe ears falling back and forth with every motion of the animal, as if without life, rough, gray hair, and misshapen legs, they formed a most ludicrous picture. What is done with them in summer, where, as here, there are no fences, I did not ascertain; perhaps *los burros* are endowed with enough sagacity, coupled with the fear of the cudgel, to refrain from touching the forbidden grain.

With Hatcher I visited the house[1] in which Governor Bent was murdered, who, with the district attorney, J. W. Liel, came from Santa Fe to issue a proclamation. While here in Fernandez with his family, he was roused from sleep one morning early, by the populace, who, with the aid of the Pueblos de Taos, were collected in front of his dwelling, striving to gain admittance. While they were effecting an entrance, he, with an ax, cut through an adobe wall into another house. The wife of the occupant, a clever though thriftless Canadian, heard him; and, with all her strength, rendered him assistance, though she was a Mexican. He retreated to a room, but seeing no way of escaping from the infuriated assailants, who fired upon him through a window, he spoke to his weeping wife and trembling children, who clung to him with all the tenacity of love and despair. Taking paper from his pocket, he endeavored to write; but fast losing strength, he commended them to God and his brothers, and fell pierced by a Pueblo's ball. Rushing in and tearing off the gray-haired scalp, the Indians bore it away in triumph.

The district attorney, Liel, was scalped alive and dragged through the streets, his relentless perse-

[1]*The house*—Gov. Charles Bent's house is still to be seen in Taos, as is also the former home of Kit Carson.

cutors pricking him with lances. After hours of acute suffering, he was thrown to one side in the inclement weather. He entreated, implored them earnestly to kill him—to end his misery. A compassionate Mexican at last closed the tragic scene by shooting him. Stephen Lee, brother to the general, was killed on his own housetop.

At the commencement of the massacre, Narcisse Beaubien, son of the presiding judge of this district, who came out in our company with his Indian slave, hid in an outhouse, under a straw-covered trough. The insurgents on the search, thinking they had escaped, were leaving; but a woman—servant to the family—going to the housetop, called them, with the words—"Kill the young ones, and they will never be men to trouble us." They swarmed back, and cruelly put to death and scalped him and his slave, thus adding two more to the unfortunate victims of unbounded passion and long-cherished revenge.

Narcisse had been to Cape Girardeau college, below St. Louis, for five years; and, when he left, was proficient in the French, Spanish, and English languages, as well as versed in the usual college studies. During the journey he often dwelt with delight on his return home, and of the different duties and pleasures to be performed and enjoyed. When we parted at Bent's Fort—he for the Valley of Taos, I for the village—his last words were warm and pressing invitations to pay him a lengthy visit; but two short months had scarcely passed ere he was numbered among the slain. The fact that his father was a native and his mother a Mexican, with the advantages he possessed over his fellow citizens by a liberal education, would have given scope for his undoubted talents to be exerted in his own land and for its material benefit.

The church[1] in this place (Fernandez) was an adobe structure, with towers and bells, and not attractive in architecture or ornament. The valley in every direction was cultivated, and in the total absence of fences, presented the unusual sight of one large field, stretching away for miles, intersected by numberless ditches, similar to the Louisiana plantations; only that, in the latter State, the ditches are to drain, here to water, the land.

The melting snow from the mountain flows to the valley, where it is turned into large *acequias;* from these into branches, and again through each man's possession. When a plat needs watering, the ditch below it is stopped with a few shovelsful of earth, water suffered to flow in, and, there being no egress, it inundates the plat, thereby giving the vegetation a more effectual and well-timed flooding than the uncertain showers. This seems a preferable mode; for the ditch once dug, with an occasional cleaning, serves forever. When it does need scraping out, the *alcalde,* or mayor, issues an order, and the work is done by the people conjointly, so the labor is but slight to any one man.

The New-Mexican plows, for the most part, are of the primitive kind—the same as those used by the Egyptians thousands of years ago—being but the fork of a small tree, with only one handle. The point entering the ground is sometimes shod with iron. Last fall, Bent, St. Vrain & Co. brought out several American plows. It is to be hoped the natives will learn something from these models.

The soil, by long-continued cultivation and absence of stumps, trees, and other impediments to easy

---

[1]*Church*—The ruins of this church still stand, and the church-yard is still used as a burial ground.

culture, is highly arable; consequently, there is no great need of better implements of tillage. The return for the grain sown is good. Wheat and corn form the pricipal products. The former is used extensively in the manufacture of "Taos whisky," with which everyone becomes well acquainted, more particularly if he forms one of a mountaineer party. If we were to drink the wheat liquor as an American distillation, it would be called poor stuff; as Mexican *agua ardiente*, it was excellent.

I understood that Le Fevre had a saddle for sale; and one day, entering his courtyard, I perceived him at the further end, assisted by a newly-grown son, making one of the old-fashioned plows. He invited me to the house, where we were welcomed by his daughter into a nicely-furnished, comfortable room.

Señorita Le Fevre was one of those beauties, fair to gaze upon, who are impressive in their simple, quiet manner. Though we could not converse, eloquence was in her silence, persuasion in her eye. A look at her frank, intelligent countenance, made me wish for her a better home and more refined company than that of San Fernandez. Her mother is a Mexican woman, of matronly, pleasing proportions; her father a Canadian Frenchman, clever enough.

The saddle came from Chiahuahua originally—high cantle and pommel, with ponderous, fancifully carved, wooden stirrups. It suited me well, and I paid a high price for it, though I thought it cheap. It was certainly worth nine dollars, and the sight of Le Fevre's daughter made me consider the remaining nine as nothing. The stirrups of wood have the preference over those of iron here in cold

weather, besides presenting a broader surface to the moccasined foot.

At the house of George Bent (brother to the late governor, and partner of the firm of Bent, St. Vrain & Co.), I met Judge Houghton (of the Santa Fe district, and associate of Judge Beaubien), F. P. Blair, Jr., and Mr. Bent himself, who is married to a New Mexican lady. Mr. Blair was slight formed, young, and agreeable in his manners, and, to judge from his labors in the courtroom, possessed of some legal talent and adroitness. His age was not much, if any, past twenty-two.

At the foot of a slope were several springs, and toward sunset I used to walk out that way, and, seated on a bank or adobe ruin, watch the women procuring water. Their peculiar style of dress displays the form to advantage; and with well-filled, antique-fashioned earthen jars—manufactured by Indians inhabiting the country between this and California—poised on the head; with arms folded, the *reboza* in graceful plaits on the shoulders, and erect, dignified carriage, they, indeed, formed a picturesque and pleasing sight. My thoughts were directed to the Bible descriptions of the drawers of water, and of the fair daughters of Jerusalem coming to the wells—how they lingered about the fountain to exchange salutations.

Court was in daily session; five more Indians and four Mexicans were sentenced to be hung on the 30th of April; but, exciting as were the court proceedings, very few of us spent much time in the room; we wanted to be moving about.

A remarkable circumstance was that whenever Chadwick was on the jury as foreman, the prisoners were returned "guilty in the first degree."

One little Frenchman, Baptiste by name, with not

two ideas above eating and drinking, was duly empaneled as a juror, to try the first six subsequently sentenced.

On going into the consulting room, Baptiste went to Chad, and asked—"Monsieur Chadwick! vot shall I say?" "Keep still, man, until we talk awhile to the rest about it," rejoined Chad, "don't be in such a hurry."

"Oui! Oui! eh bien! c'est bon; tres bien! mais Monsieur, vat sall ve do avec sacre' prisoners—sacre' enfants—"

"Baptiste! man, keep still; why, hang them, of course; what did you come in here for?" angrily replied he, much annoyed, "Wait till I am done with these Mexicans (part of the jury), and I will tell you what you must do."

In the last cases—the nine just mentioned—Chadwick and Baptiste were again in their relative positions. As soon as the jury-room door was closed, he sung out—"Hang 'em, hang 'em, *sacre' enfans des garces,* dey dam grand rascales." Now getting excited and pacing the room, *"parceque* dey kill Monsieur Charles (Governor Bent), dey take son topknot, vot you call im—sculp; dis *enfant,* he go ondare too, *mais,* he make beevare—run, you Mexican say—*pour le montaigne*—wagh! A-ah! *oui,* Monsieur Chadwick, you no tink so?—hang 'em, *sa-a-cre-e!*

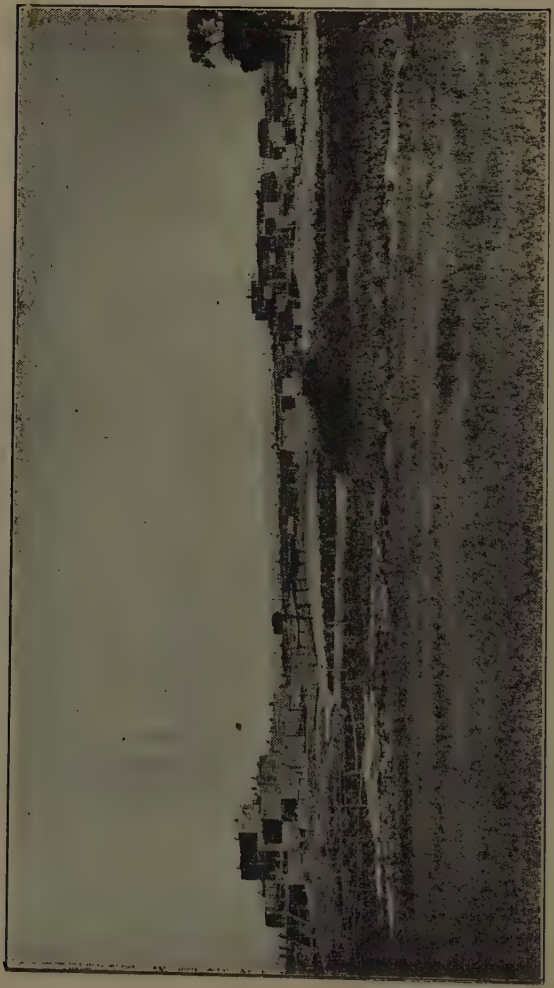
In the courtroom, on the occasion of the trial of the above nine prisoners, were Señora Bent, the late Governor's wife, and Señora Boggs, giving in their evidence in regard to the massacre, of which they were eye witnesses. Señora Bent was quite handsome; a few years since, she must have been a beautiful woman—good figure for her age; luxuriant raven hair; exceptional teeth, and brilliant, dark dark eyes, the effect of which was heightened by a

clear, brunette complexion. The other lady, though not so agreeable in appearance, was much younger. The wife of the renowned mountaineer, Kit Carson, also was in attendance. Her style of beauty was of the haughty, heart-breaking kind—such as would lead a man with the glance of the eye to risk his life for one smile. I could not but desire her acquaintance. The dress and manners of the three ladies bespoke a greater degree of refinement than usual.

The courtroom was a small, oblong apartment, dimly lighted by two narrow windows; a thin railing kept the bystanders from contact with the functionaries. The prisoners faced the Judges, and the three witnesses (Señoras Bent, Boggs and Carson)[1] were close to them on a bench by the wall. When Mrs. Bent gave her testimony, the eyes of the culprits were fixed sternly upon her. On her pointing out the Indian who killed the Governor, not a muscle of the chief's face twitched or betrayed agitation, though he was aware that her evidence unmistakably sealed his death warrant. He sat with lips gently closed, eyes centered earnestly upon her, without a show of malice or hatred—an almost sublime spectacle of Indian fortitude, and of the severe mastery to which the emotions can be subjected. Truly, it was a noble example of Indian stoicism.

---

[1]*Señoras Bent, Boggs, and Carson*—Mrs. Bent and Mrs. Carson were sisters, of the Jaramillo family; Mrs. Boggs was also a Spanish woman, step-daughter of Charles Bent.



PUEBLO (INDIAN TOWN) OF TAOS TO-DAY

CHAPTER XVI

Los Pueblos

Hatcher, Lony Simonds and myself walked up to the Pueblo, by way of variety, as court was dull; and though without guns, we retained our scalp knives, more through force of habit than necessity. After a walk over the fields and crossing *acequias* fringed with bushes and sparkling with cool water, we came in sight of two irregular, immense piles of adobes—towers of loopholes, everywhere visible—and a broken, blackened ruin. These composed the celebrated Pueblo de Taos—the stronghold of bravery, and the terror of the vale of Taos. A clear stream of water flowed between the two structures, over a green, white, and gray pebbly bottom. As we crossed on large flat stepping-stones, at irregular intervals, the crystal fluid breaking and foaming, murmuring softly over, here a cascade, there an eddy, in which the foam bubbles glided round and round, we passed by a Pueblo woman washing, her kettles hanging over some pine sticks, the vapory blue smoke from which waved upward in the bright sun. Around were the accumulated ashes of years, imbedded and hardened by frequent rains and constant tramping. The palisade, composed in part of wooden puncheons and part of thick adobes, formerly connecting the two great houses and the church (making a large inclosure), was broken down in many places by the Americans in battle and by neglect; the puncheons, sticking up at every angle, gave an old, tumble-down aspect to the whole.

The church was the most important, as well as first, feature in the town, from the fact of its having been the principal scene of action in the fierce and

sanguinary conflict between El Norte Americanos on the one side, and the combined forces of the Pueblo Indians and Mexicans on the other.

It (the church) was an adobe building, parallelogram shaped; high, thick walls, with no openings on the outer one, or those facing the yard, save embrasures and loopholes, rudely cut for the occasion of the late battle. The front entrance faced the south; the west and north sides (as I have mentioned, devoid of windows), faced the open fields toward the Rio Grande, the town of San Fernandez and the Ranchita.

As this was the culminating point of all the differences between the Americans and the New Mexicans, an account may be essential to a portion of the readers of this narrative, of the origin, progress, and termination of the then pending difficulties; and, while seated on a broken baggage-wagon, to the south, and in full view of the town, looking and musing on the devastating effects of war, the requisite information will be succinctly given.

General Kearney, in command of the Army of the West, marched to the capital of this province (Santa Fé) and quietly took possession, claiming it as United States territory. By him the oath of allegiance was administered to many of the inhabitants *in propria persona* (personally); in many cases the *alcades* or mayors of the small towns received it for themselves and people. In this way the province was Americanized; a governor and a complement of judges, attorneys, sheriffs, and other appurtenances and impertinences of even-handed justice appointed; and, as the people appeared to be well contented, it was thought a bloodless conquest had been made, reflecting credit alike on the character of the provincials and the Army of the West! Leaving Colonel

Price in command of the military force, and Governor Bent as the civil head of the territory, Kearney left New Mexico for California to add fresh laurels to his wreath of victory, taking with him a small armed force. Of the results of this latter expedition all are cognizant.

In New Mexico everything was in a peaceful, prosperous condition to all outward show; the people traded freely; small foraging and herding parties of American soldiery were everywhere scattered, placing confidence in the inhabitants. It was afterward seen that designing men—artful and learned natives—were busily, insidiously sowing the seeds of discontent among the more ignorant class of the community, more especially the Pueblo Indians.[1] The result was, they soon considered themselves outraged—their lives at stake—their possessions in danger. With inflamed passions and perverted minds, the brutal attack upon Governor Bent was commenced; and with cries of extermination, they advanced on Santa Fe, receiving constant accessions in their triumphant march. Meanwhile, in other towns, massacres were frequent, and the perpetrators of these, joining the main body of insurgents, met Colonel Price in the cañon El Embuda,[2] where they were defeated with a small loss. They rallied in a few miles, and again they were forced to retreat. Colonel Price, marching with his cannon and baggage train over a new-cut road, through deep snows, fol-

---

[1]*Pueblos*—Indians inhabiting villages of permanent stone or adobe houses in the Southwest (of five different stocks); Taos, a pueblo of the Tigua, consisted of two house groups (North town and South town) on Taos River. First visited by Coronado's men in 1540. Uprisings against whites have occurred there in 1680, 1696, 1847, 1910.

[2]*Embudo*—Pass through the hills on the way to Taos from Santa Fe.

lowed them to the Pueblo de Taos, the place best calculated, in all the valley, for an obstinate resistance. Here, the enemy, barricading themselves in the houses, bade defiance to their pursuers; who, coming on them late in the evening, commenced a bombardment with twelve-pound mountain howitzers. But night forced them to withdraw to San Fernandez, two miles distant, amid the cries and jeers of the securely posted foe. In the morning, Price, with his command, moved forward in fine order over the intervening plain, first sending Captain St. Vrain, with whom the reader has become fully acquainted, and his troop of volunteers for the occasion, of mountaineers, traders, etc., skilled in Indian warfare, to the fields between the Pueblo and the mountain, a half mile distant, to intercept the retreat. A fire was opened by the howitzers, at four hundred yards, and, after some skirmishing by the infantry and Burgwin's[1] command of dragoons, the enemy retreated to the church, from the numerous loopholes of which they poured out a galling fire. The battery was now ordered up within a few hundred yards, which had some effect; but the balls striking the tough mud-walls, did not always penetrate. Burgwin's dismounted men then stormed the front door of the church. After a spirited attack of several minutes, they were repulsed with the loss of their brave leader. The command devolving on Lieutenant McIlvaine, they were ordered to the west side; where, with axes, a breach was cut, through which they entered, several losing thir lives. The cannon were run up to the breach; the bursting of

---

[1]*Burgwin, John Henry K.*—Graduate West Point Military Academy 1826; commissioned Captain 1837; wounded at Taos, Feb. 4, 1847. Died February 7, 1847.

the bombs in the small space, in which so many were crowded, caused a great destruction of life. "The mingled noise of bursting shells, firearms, the yells of the Americans, and the shrieks of the wounded," says my narrator, an eyewitness, "was most appalling."

A Delaware Indian, Big Nigger[1] by name, a keen shot, was the most desperate of the enemy. When the roof was fired, and the Americans poured in, he was pursued to the room behind the altar, where he fell, riddled by thirty balls. Many of the foe fled toward the mountain. Captain St. Vrain, with his company, gave many their final quietus. The American loss was seven killed—that of the enemy one hundred and fifty. A number of prisoners, among them the leader, Montojo, were hung the next day by drumhead court-martial, in the plaza of San Fernandez. Others were committed to jail to await a trial by civil law. Colonel Price returned to Santa Fe, leaving a strong force to support the civil authorities in pursuance of their respective duties.

To resume the thread of our narrative—we stood on the spot where fell the gallant Burgwin, the first captain of the First Dragoons, and then passed to the west side, entering the church at the stormers' breach, through which the missiles of death were hurled. We silently paused in the center of the house of Pueblo worship. Above, between the charred and blackened rafters which leaned from their places as if ready to fall on us, could be seen the

---

[1]*Big Nigger*—Ruxton says he escaped, after killing most of the Americans who were killed; his wife, a Taos Indian, loaded his gun for him. The Delawares, a confederacy of Algonkin stock, formerly on the Atlantic coast, and afterward much employed by whites as scouts and hunters. Now mostly in Canada and in Oklahoma.

spotless blue sky of this pure clime; on either side the lofty walls, perforated by cannon ball and loophole, let in the long lines of uncertain gray light; and, strewed and piled about the floor, as on the day of battle, were broken, burnt beams and heaps of adobes. Climbing and jumping over them, we made our way to the altar, now a broken platform, with scarce a sign or vestige of its former use, and, in the room behind, we saw where Big Nigger and others, after a determined struggle, bravely met their certain fate. Hatcher was acquainted with the Delaware in former years. On emerging into the inclosure, we looked around.

A few half-scared Pueblos walked listlessly about, vacantly staring in a state of dejected, gloomy abstraction. And they might well be dejected, their *alcalde* dead, their grain and cattle gone, their church in ruins, the flower of the nation slain or under sentence of death, and the rest—with the exception of those in prison—refugees, starving in the mountains. It was truly a scene of desolation. In the strong hope of victory they made no provision for defeat; in the superstitious belief of the protection afforded by the Holy Church, they were astounded beyond measure that, in the hour of need, they should be forsaken by their tutelar saint. That *los diablos Americanos* should, within the limits of consecrated ground, trample triumphant, was too much to bear; and, pitiable objects, they fled as if *diablos* from *los regiones infiernos* were after them, in sooth.

The two *casas grandes*, or large houses in which the Peublos live, are worthy of examination. They are constructed of adobes—the universal building material—seven stories in height, each story somewhat smaller than the one below it, sloping gently inward,

but not terrace-shaped. The means of egress is at the topmost story. Ladders are used on the outside from which they descend to the rooms inside. So subject are the Pueblos to attacks from hostile neighbors, that they have, from time to time, thus strengthened their habitations; and, as the ladders are pulled to the roof, in case of danger, they are safe from their enemies' lances and scalpknives; for, should an attempt be made at scaling, the attackers would be exposed to the fire of the beseiged loopholes. An engineer might suggest the plan of undermining the soft building; the Indian besiegers, devoid of invention, have yet to try the plan.

As a mode of defense from their usual enemy, the Indian, it certainly is admirable; but what fort or foe can withstand the assaults of the energetic Anglo-Saxon, aided by consummate skill and the most destructive engines of war?

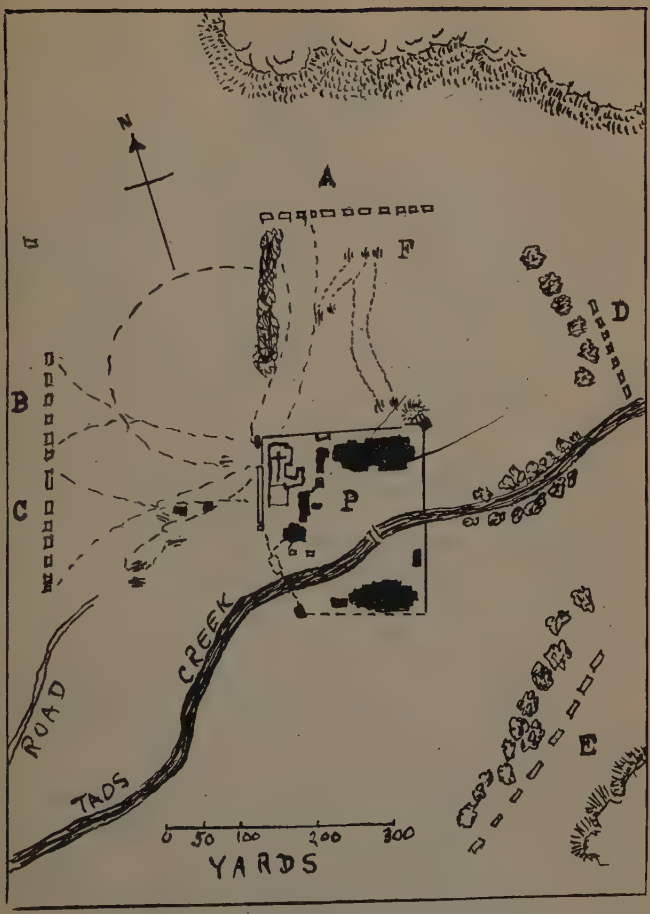
The adobe, or sun-dried brick is, I think, even better than burnt brick or stone, to resist a bombardment; as the ball either passes through, making but a small hole, or the force is spent against the wall, without shattering the building. In several places where the cannon ball had penetrated three, four, or five inches, it rolled out again without cracking or shattering the wall in the least. Being tenacious and yielding, the mud brick serves as a good bulwark, not capable of being fired, and in this dry climate resists the trials of time and rain exceedingly well. Much credit is due the Pueblos de Taos for their determined and manly resistance to what they considered tyranny, and for the capital manner in which their fortifications were planned; but, as a matter of course, they were defeated by the Americans. Who could, for a moment, expect anything else?

For years the Pueblo, by reason of fierceness of disposition, has held the balance of power in this district. It was the Pueblo who first revolted, and committed the late outrages—the Pueblo who, several years since, rose in arms, to put every American to death—the Pueblo who has kept this district in a continual ferment; but, at last, at last, he has met his conqueror!

They approach nearer to civilization than any of the nomadic tribes of the West; profess the Roman Catholic religion; which, by reason of ignorance, is mixed with a large share of superstition; submit to civil law under the guidance of an *alcalde*,[1] of *sangre regular*;[2] cultivate the ground; and, in many points, assimilate to the manners and customs of civilized man.

---

[1]*Alcalde*—Major, justice of the peace.
[2]*Sangre regular*—good stock.



PLAN OF THE STORMING OF TAOS PUEBLO

CHAPTER XVII

El Muerte

On Friday the ninth, the sky was unspotted, save by hastily-fleeting clouds; and, as the rising sun loomed over the Taos Mountain, the bright rays, shining on the yellow and white mud houses, reflected cheerful hues, while the shades of the toppling peaks receding from the plain beneath, drew within themselves. The humble valley wore an air of calm repose. The plaza was deserted; woebegone donkeys drawled forth sacrilegious brays, as the warm sunbeams roused them from hard, grassless ground, to scent among straw or bones their breakfast; a señora in her nightdress, with disreveled hair which, at the *fandango,* was the admiration of the moustached *señors* and half-wild *voluntarios* (volunteers), could here and there be seen at this early hour, opening her house, previous to the preparation of the fiery *chile colorado.*

As onward sped the day, so did the crowd of morning drinkers at Estis's tavern renew their libations to Bacchus. Poor Mexicans hurried to and fro, casting suspicious glances around; *los Yankees* at *El casa Americano* drank their juleps and puffed their *cigarillos* in silence.

The sheriff (Metcalfe, formerly a mountaineer, son-in-law to Estis) was in want of the wherewith to hang the criminals, so he borrowed our rawhide lariats, and two or three hempen picket cords of a teamster. In a room adjoining the bar, we put the hangman's noose on one end, tugging away quite heartily.

A while after we had been talking of the propriety, etc., of taking the Mexicans' lives, Hatcher said—

"This hos has feelin's hyar," slapping his breast, "for poor human natur in most any fix, but for these *palous* (*pelados*) he doesn't care a cuss."

"Yes," replied I, "they scalped Liel alive, and butchered innocent persons."

"This coon," remarked Hatcher, "has made Injuns 'go under,' some—wagh!—but he's never sculped 'em live; this child's no niggur, an' he says its onhuman—agin natur—an they ought to choke. Hello, Met, these riatas mity stiff—won't fit; eh, old feller?"

"I've got something to make 'em fit—good 'intment—don't ermit very sweet parfume; but good 'nough for greasers; freeze into it, boys," said Metcalf, producing a *rial's* worth of Mexican soft soap, "this 'ill make 'em slip easy—a long ways too easy for them, I 'spect."

We rubbed in the "intment," until the nooses could have been "warranted" to serve the intended purpose, without hitching; on the teamster's hard ropes, we used an unusual quantity. One item in Met's bill of expenses, was:

"To soft soap for greasing nooses—12½."

Our fee for loan of lariats, consisted in the proffered *aguardiente* produced after washing our hands—not of the pleasant transaction of tying hangman's nooses—but of the soap sticking on our fingers.

With newly-lighted *cigarillos* between our teeth, we walked with the sheriff to the jail, taking along our halters—the significant loops, conspicuous, drawing the attention of both soldier and native, eliciting from the former, familiar exclamations, such as—"Go to it, my boys." "Them's the dokyments"—"Sarve 'em up brown"—from the latter, wondering looks.

Entering a *portal,* with a nod to the sentinel on duty, we found ourselves in a court. In a room

fronting this, was a ragged, ill-looking *pelado*, conversing with a miserably-dressed old woman—his mother—and discussing greenish-blue *tortillas*, and *chile colorado*, under the espionage of a slouchily-attired, long-haired, dirty and awkward volunteer, who, to judge by his outward show, was no credit to his corps or silver-gilt eagle buttons. He leaned in a most unsoldierlike position against the door-frame; and on our near approach, drew his feet somewhat closer to perpendicular, accosting us with—"Well, strangers! how are ye?"

"Quite well, thank you," replied one of us.

"Them's great britches of yourn," he broke in abruptly, after eyeing my fringed buckskins for some moments, "whar 'd they 'riginate—Santa Fe? Beats linsey-woolsey all holler, down to Callaway county."[1]

"Santa Fe!" replied Hatcher, disgusted with the fellow's simplicity, "Why hoss, them's Californy!"

"Cal-y-for-ny! my oh! let's look at them, stranger. Calyforny! way over yonder!" half way solioquising, and staring me doubtingly, with a side twist to his head and a knowing squint from his porcine eyes, "Now, you don't mean to say you was in them britches when they was in Calyforny?"

"Him?" interrupted Hatcher, wishing to astonish the man, "that boy's been everywhar. He's stole more mule flesh from the Spaniards,[2] and 'raised' more Injun har, than you could tuck in your belt in a week!"

"How raise Injun hair? Like we raise corn and hemp to Callaway county, ur jest like raising hogs and y'oxens."

"Oh! you darned fool," retorted Louy Simonds, "a long ways the greenest Ned we see yet."

---

[1] *Callaway county*—In Missouri.
[2] *Spaniards*—Mexicans.

"No!" rejoined he imperatively, "when an Injun's a 'gone beaver,' we take a knife like this," pulling out his long scalpblade, which motion caused the man to open his eye, "an' ketch hold of the topknot, an' rip skin an' all right off, quicker an' a goat could jump!"

"What's a 'gone beaver,' stranger?" again spoke up our verdant querist.

"Why, whar was you brung up, not to know the meanin' of sich terms—we'ud show you round for a curiosity up in the mountains—let's go, fellers."

We started to another part of the jail, but were stopped by a final question from our brave volunteer to Hatcher—"Stranger! what mout your name be, ef I might be so free-like?"

"Well, hoss!" returned the questioned. "My name mout be Bill Williams,[1] or it mout be Rube Herring,[2] or it mout be John Smith,[3] or it mout be Jim Beckwith,[4] but this buffler's called John L. Hatcher, to rendevoo—wagh!"

We strolled to the room in which were the condemned and other prisoners, to the number of eighty and more. A brass howitzer, the muzzle within four feet of the door, stood always ready to quell a tumult.

It (the prison apartment) was a long, chilly room, badly ventilated by one small window and the open door, through which the sun lit up the earth floor, and through which the poor *pelados* wistfully gazed. Two muscular Mexicans basked in its genial warmth,

[1]*Bill Williams*—Ex-preacher, trapper, queer customer, scout for Fremont. Williams, Arizona, Bill Williams Peak, and Williams Fork in Middle Park, Colorado are named for him. He was killed in Middle Park, 1848-9.

[2]*Rube Herring*, famous trapper.

[3]*Jack Smith*, Bent's trader.

[4]*Jim Beckworth*, mulatto trapper, smuggler, scout, Crow chief, author, poisoned by his Indian wife. Beckwith Pass named for him. Born 1797. Died 1867.

a tattered and dirty *serape* interposed between them and the ground. The ends, once fringed, but now nearly clear of pristine ornament, were partly drawn over their breasts, disclosing in the openings of their fancifully-colored shirts—now glazed with filth, and faded with perspiration—the bare skin, covered with a wilderness of straight, black hair. With hands under their heads, in the mass of stringy locks rusty-brown with neglect, and their attenuated smutty fingers coming through, revealing uncut nails, filled with dirt, they returned our looks with an unmeaning stare, and unheedingly received our salutation of —"*Comme la va!*"

These men were the condemned. In two short hours, they hung lifeless on the gallows.

Along the sides of the room, leaning against the walls, were crowded and poor wretches, miserable in dress, miserable in features, miserable in feelings—a more disgusting collection of ragged, lousy, greasy, unwashed *pelados* was probably never before congregated within so small a space as the jail of Taos.

About nine o'clock, active preparations were made for the execution, and the soldiery mustered. Reverend *padres* on the solemn mission of administering the "blessed sacrament" and spiritual consolation, in long, black gowns, and meek countenances, passed the sentinels.

Lieutenant Colonel Willock, commanding the military, ordered every American under arms. In accordance with the requisition, and with a desire to participate in the fight, should there be any (at least not to be helpless), I went for my gun which had been delivered to one of the household for safekeeping.

Seeing Señora St. Vrain, in my best Spanish, I said to her—

"Señora! esta riflero? cary mucho—" "Madam, where is my rifle?"

"Who knows, sir? Care you a great deal for it?" with a smile and shrug of the shoulders, *"esta"*—"Here"—said she, handing it to me; *"Vamos—prento, por el rancheros"*—"Go quick for the *rancheros*."

"Si, gracias, Señora adios"—"Yes, madam, thanks—farewell," replied I, touching my battered wool hat.

"Adios Señor Americano"—"Farewell, Sir American," returned she, tenderly.

On the houses, as I walked to the jail, were women trying to catch a glimpse of the prisoners and soldiers. As I passed by an *azotea*, on which were two acquaintances, one cried out—*"Señor!"*

"Quien?"—"what is it?"

"Eh Señor! los rancheros muy diablos, muy tiefas, caraho!" "The rancheros are very great thieves—great devils!"

"Yes, ladies," and I passed on with a low bow in acknowledgment of their salutation.

The prison was at the edge of town; no houses intervened between it and the fields to the north. One hundred and fifty yards distant, a scaffold of two upright posts and a crossbeam was erected.

At the portal were several *compañeros*, discussing in a very light way the "fun," as they termed it, on hand; they almost wished a rescue would be attempted, so as to gratify their propensity for excitement.

The word was passed at last that the criminals were coming. Eighteen soldiers received them at the gate, with their muskets at port arms—the six abreast, with the sheriff on the right—nine soldiers on each side. Hatcher, Louy Simonds, Chadwick, myself, and others, eight in all, formed in line a pace

behind as the rearguard, with our trusty mountain rifles at rest in the bended elbow of the left arm, the right hand resting on the stock, to be drawn up to the face, and all ready to fight on our own responsibility at the least intimation of danger.

The poor *pelados* marched slowly, with downcast eyes, arms tied behind, and bare heads, with the exception of white cotton caps stuck on the back part, to be pulled over the face as the last ceremony.

The *azoteas*—roofs—in our vicinity, were covered with women and children, to witness the first execution, by hanging, in the valley of Taos, save that of Montojo, the insurgent leader. No men were near; a few afar off stood moodily looking on.

On the flat jailroof was placed a mountain howitzer (the same piece had done the state some service at the battle of the Pueblo), loaded and ranging the gallows. Near, was the complement of men to serve it, one holding in his hand a lighted match.

The two hundred and thirty soldiers (deducting the eighteen forming the guard) were paraded in front of the jail, and in sight of the gibbet, so as to secure the prisoners awaiting trial. Lieutenant Colonel Willock, on a handsome charger, from his position commanded a view of the whole.

When within fifteen paces of the gallows, the sideguard, filing off to the right and left, formed, at regular distances from each other, three sides of a hollow square; the mountaineers and myself composed the fourth and front side, in full view of the trembling prisoners, who marched up to the tree, under which was a government wagon, with two mules attached. The driver and sheriff assisted them in, ranging them on a board placed across the hinder end, which maintained its balance, as they were six—an even number—two on each extremity,

and two in the middle. The gallows was so narrow they touched. The ropes, by reason of size and stiffness, despite the soaping given them, were adjusted with difficulty; but, through the indefatigable efforts of the sheriff and the lieutenant (who accompanied us from the ranch), all preliminaries were arranged. The latter, officiating as deputy sheriff for the occasion, seemed to enjoy the position, but the blue uniform looked sadly out of place on a hangman.

With rifles grounded, we awaited the consummation of the fearful tragedy. No crowd was around to disturb; a death-like stillness reigned. The spectators on the *azoteas* seemed scarcely to move—their eyes directed to the painful sight of the doomed wretches, with harsh halters now encircling their necks.

The sheriff and assistant sat down; and, succeeding a few moments of intense expectation, the heart-wrung victims said a few words to their people.

All but one said that they had committed murder and deserved death. In their brief but earnest appeals, which I could but imperfectly comprehend, the words *mi padre, mi madre*—my father, my mother—could be distinguished. The one sentenced for treason showed a spirit of martyrdom worthy of the cause for which he died—the liberty of his country; and, instead of the cringing, contemptible recantation of the others, his speech was firm asseverations of his own innocence, the unjustness of his trial, and the arbitrary conduct of his murderers. With a scowl, as the cap was pulled over his face, the last words he uttered between his gritting teeth were, "*caraho, los Americanos!*" The atrocity of the act of hanging that man for treason is most damnable; with the execution of those for murder no fault should be found.

They bade each other *adios,* with a hope of meeting in heaven; then at a word from the sheriff the mules were started, and the wagon drawn from under the tree. No fall was given, and their feet remained on the board till the ropes drew taut. The bodies swayed back and forth, and, coming in contact with each other, convulsive shudders shook their frames; the muscles, contracting, would relax, and again contract, and the bodies writhed most horribly.

While thus swinging, the hands of two came together, which they held with a firm grasp till the muscles loosened in death.

After forty minutes' suspension, Col. Willock ordered his command to quarters, and the howitzer was taken from its place on the prison roof. The soldiers were called off; the women, children, and population in general collected around us—the rear guard—whom the sheriff detained for protection, while delivering the dead bodies to the weeping relatives.

We made a collection among ourselves of five dollars, and dispatched a messenger to *el casa Americano,* to prepare for us, when relieved from duty, an eggnog in honor of the occasion; for the Mexican has long been the dislike of the mountaineer, for overbearing conduct. Now that the mountaineer has for once triumphed, a merrymaking must be given. We helped the sheriff to take down the bodies, and untie the ropes—a most unpleasant business, too; for the cold clammy skins and dead weight were revolting to the touch.

We were cutting a rope from one man's neck—it was in such a hard knot—when the owner (a government teamster), standing by waiting, shouted angrily, at the same time starting forward—

"Hello there! don't cut that rope; I won't have anything to tie my mules with."

"Oh! you darned fool," interposed a mountaineer, "the *palous'* ghosts 'll be after you, if you use them *'riatas*—wagh! They'll make meat of you, sartain."

"Well, I don't care if they do. I'm in government service; an if them picket halters was gone, slap down would go a dollar apiece. Money's scarce in these diggins, an' I'm gwine to save all I kin, to take home to the old 'oman and the boys."

In accordance with the fellow's earnest request, we spared the ropes, on which was soap enough for a dozen good washings, which he much needed.

Shouldering our rifles, we walked to the tavern—discussing the length of time a man will live after he is swung off—where the fellows, washing, *primed* with the "raw" (real American brandy from Estis' personal store, less adulterated than that at the bar), and, seating themselves in the family room, near the handsome *señoras*, were regaled with the best eggnog it is possible to manufacture from the materials. Who would blame a man for making a temporary sacrifice of himself to Bacchus on such an occasion and in the presence of such dark-eyed beauties? We had, beside, brandy, a discretion.

"Sa-cre!" ejaculated a Canadian, after imbibing a glass of the foamy beverage, with a strained, half grunt of approbation, *"Tonnere de Dieu! ce liqueur est tres bon—ah, oui! trop bon,"* added he, in a higher key of delight.

"Wagh!" chimed in a hardy, self-pleased mountainman, "this knocks the hind sights off old Touse (Taos whisky). "I'se drunk," continued he, in a musing tone of voice, "a heap liquor in my chargin' lifetime. Thar's alkyhol as makes drunk come mity quick; but 't aint good— burns up the innards; an' a feller feels like a gut-shot coyote. Then thar's Touse arwardenty; it's d—d poor stuff—kin taste the corn in

it—makes me think I'm a hos, a feedin' away fur plowin' time; an' I allers squeals, an' raises my hind foot to kick, when any *palou* comes about my heels. Then thar's—thar's" (his strong potations of the "raw" affecting him) "State brandy; that's good, too —kin drink on it all night; but this coon wants to dance Injun when he hides that in his meatbag.' (Rising to his feet, and commencing an Indian dance): "Here's luck, boys! wh-oop! ow-ow-gh! hay a hay—hay-he-ah-hay—ow-ow-gh-he-a, whoop! I'm drunk, boys— *muy borachio*—very drunk, as the darned Spaniards say." Here he fell on the floor and went to sleep. The rest looked on in drunken merriment.

It is the opinion of eye-witnesses that the chivalric, noble, and patriotic "rearguard" knows little or nothing of the transactions of that eventful day, subsequent to one o'clock, or the time of entering Estis's private room.

A nervous, fidgety Canadian—living, I believe, in Taos—came to us shortly after the bodies were taken away for burial, declaring that *"von prisonnier* to de Ranchito vas come to de life *encore."*

We replied, not if there was any virtue in seventy minutes' suspension with rawhide riatas.

To the Ranchito is something less than a mile. The little fellow kept himself in a fume for two hours running back and forth to see whether "de prisonier" had yet opened his eyes.

CHAPTER XVIII

Adios!

Hatcher, concluding that we had better return to the ranch, proposed to do so, and one afternoon we left, first loading our packmule at George Bent's with a bulky bag of *biscoche*—hard bread. While they tarried behind to exchange farewells with their *señoritas* and take a parting drink, I drove on the packmule so as to gain time. He was an ungainly, vicious animal; and, on a severe application of my gunstick to his dusty hide, he laid flat his ears to his neck, raised his hindlegs, and with a petulant squeal, shot them out, rattling against my hard saddletree, barely missing my body; and before I could turn out of reach, the heel battery was again brought to bear, this time taking effect on my right leg. I felt like chewing up all the donkey flesh in Taos.

My friends soon caught up. Keeping our packmule in front, and riding abreast on the level road, we jogged along finely, half-screaming, half-scolding, whenever the mule attempted to dodge one side. Sometimes he would stop stock still in the full career of a fast trot; we would shoot by and then would ensue a race, sundry curses, and much belaboring with gunrods.

We saw, to our surprise, at the large distillery, near the mouth of the cañon, Sadler, an old acquaintance, with as big a heart as any man in the mountains, attired in a costume claiming originality with the Indians, Mexicans, and himself! He welcomed us—

"Walk in, boys, hyar's old Touse—not so old, but good—and I'm distiller."

Within, the interesting process of whiskey-making was in progress. Sadler drew a quart cup of the new liquor, and handed it to us, which we merely tasted; had we partaken every time the free-hearted fellow passed the cup, the valley of Taos might have been our resting place for one more night. The beer, manufactured from wheat, was tolerably good.

Bidding Sadler good-bye, we made our way up the pass. Attaining to some elevation, I turned in my saddle to take a last view of the beautiful valley, where were passed a few days, so replete with interest, and diversified with scenes tragic, comic, and domestic.

Nature has done much to render acceptable the country—

"'T is only man that's vile."

Woman is woman the world over, no matter where she is found. Though we were strangers and enemies, the Mexican women stood ready to greet us with a smile; and food, lodging, and the fragrant *cigarillo* were ever at our disposal. Take the valley and its people all in all, there was much to admire, and more to condemn—my mule's head, however, was turned to the mountain with some reluctance.

The sun and water cheered us, and we felt pleasure in the anticipated prospect of sleeping in the open air—a perfect luxury after having been cabined, cribbed, and confined in a tight adobe Mexican case.

The green cedar and pine, the mellow light of the sun gleaming through the branches, and the twittering of dusky-colored birds, induced a dreamy state; for long intervals naught but the pattering of our mules' feet, or the quick, metallic clink of

the flint and steel of Louy lighting a pipe, broke the silence. We were under the influence of the harmony of nature, tobacco, and Taos whisky.

Our course was in deep defiles where moss covered the rocks, dank and green, and the spreading pine overlapped its twining boughs, now winding along the tortuous pathway, around huge rocks and stunted, bushy trees, or up steeps, compelling us to cling to the manes of our animals for support.

As the shade of the mountain to the west crept over us, we came to the place where, on our journey in, we last drank coffee. Near the willow bushes we pulled the saddles from our jaded mules, placing them on the brown sward; and, watering and hobbling the animals in a sheltered spot, sat down to the beef and *biscoche* soaked in aromatic Java from the time-honored little tin kettle. We were all gratified with the idea of being free once more, and so a few of us made camp desirable. That night, I, with a bunch of *cigarillos* from a Castilian, descended *senorita* and they, with pipes, sat by the blaze in a decidedly musing mood. In my dreams, *rebozas*, black eyes, and shuck cigars were mixed in admirable confusion.

CHAPTER XIX

WAH-TO-YAH

No mules to be seen in the morning; Louy had been out an hour for them; so, partaking of a cup of coffee, Hatcher and I started in search.

"Them Purblos have *cached* our cavyard, I spect; howsomever, mules is mules, an' they will stray about—'specially when tired. You know the pass was rough yesterday, an' we'd better look good—many's the time my animals have strayed in the timber, and me a lookin' for 'em, a cussin' for darned niggurs all the Injuns atween the Heely (Gila) an' Bayou Salade."

By this time, we were at a point of the mountain, on either side of which diverged a valley of gradual slope, bare of rocks and cedar and carpeted with russet-brown grass, with small thickets of the smooth-barked aspen studying the easy declivities —presenting an inviting walk in comparison to the rugged, scoria-strewn mountainside up which we had just been laboring. On Hatcher's saying—"You take that pass, an' I'll take this; the cavyards may be gone up one or t'other—guess you'll find the trail of a rope, or some kind of sign. If you do, shoot your rifle—this child's heerd it so often crack 'gainst buffler—an' Comanches, too, wagh!—he knows the sound, an' he'll come an' help you."—he started up the left one from our position.

A fatiguing walk of half an hour brought me to—to greater aspen groves, and almost impenetrable cedar thickets. My close scrutiny for "sign," was at length rewarded while examining a leaf deposit. The foot of a mule, lately sunk in the soft ground,

and a tiny print not far distant, convinced me of being on the right trail.

In front, an isolated peak towered two hundred feet above, affording a good view of the contiguous small valleys; a tiresome clamber over stones and encounters with the bristling cactus brought me to the apex, where I fell carelessly down with momentary exhaustion of strength.

I espied the stray *caballada* below, in a sheltered oasis, quietly cropping the sweet grass —a grateful change from the scanty portion of corn at Taos; for it was scarce, and worth nine dollars the *fanega.* Untying the hobbles, I drove them in a trot down to camp with shouts, first discharging my rifle for Hatcher. Saddling up, we soon were wending our way.

As we left Taos, Bill Garmon went in. He was to stay one night and overtake us, so we expected him all day to clatter at full speed down the mountain behind us. At sundown, crossing a wide valley, we camped amid huge, detached rock in a bower of pine branches made by some vagrant *ranchero.*

The spiral smoke, turning gray in the twilight, rose from the brushfire through Louy's exertions; the *caballada,* in single file, slowly returned from water, followed by Hatcher, with gun on shoulder whistling abstractedly, and through habit searching the hills and the plains with his eye for game or foe; and I, by the fire, undid the leathern bag of *biscoche,* filled the little kettle from a bubbling rill, and with butcherknife in hand, cut thin slices of beef along (not across) the grain, in most approved style, and laid them on a wisp of grass, for we had no plates or other superfluous kitchen furniture—

the only articles requisite to a mountaineer's *cuisine* being a long knife and tin cup.

During the convenient disposition of the meat and coffee, Louy detected a horseman approaching at a lope from the direction of Taos.

"Wagh! Bill Garmon!" ejaculated he.

"How are ye?" shouted Bill at the top of his voice as far as he could be heard, at the same moment waving his old white-wool hat—"How are ye, old fellers? Lookee hyar," he spoke in a less audible tone as he threw his leg off the saddle, and held up a black flask of *aguardiente*, "hi, hi-i, hi, he-he, he-he-a, hay a hay" (rung out a Bacchanal song). "Who-oopee! horray for Taos an' arwerdenty, eh, old hos?" said he to Hatcher.

"Well now, you is some, I swan. Do'ee hyar, this beaver went down to Taos without bringin' a pint of 'baldface,' as is only in his meatbag" (patting his stomach); howsomever, you have more 'n enough for all; besides it's bad idee to bring much of the cussed stuff, what a feller has to keep his eye skinned, an' his ears picked for the Rapahoes, an' other Injun varmint; but, as you have it, old hos, this child doesn't refuse, specially from a *companyero!*"

"Now, hobble your cavyard," said Louy, relaxing in a smile at the liquor, and at calling Garmon's one mule a whole cavyard, "an' drink coffee with us—you is true grit, an' them's the sort as kin have everything 'on the prairie' as belongs to me."

"Yes!" pulling off the saddle and depositing it beside ours, in its proper place, for the night, to serve as pillow and protection for his head—"Yes! I know that, without you telling it to me, Louy; you've been in the mountains too long, old feller, to have the meanness in you yet; it's 'rubbed

out' beaver season outen mind,"—time whereof the memory runneth not to the contrary.

Notwithstanding Cassio's eloquent soliloquy of "putting that in a man's mouth which stealeth away his brains," the *aguardiente* gurgled out, amid the stifled grunts occasioned by throwing the head too far back, when the bottle was applied to the mouths of the jovial, yet quiet, group of mountaineers. Perchance a sweetened dram was wanted, and the pattering of the liquor on the bottom of the tin cup could be heard—a sharp click for the first few drops, and in filling, more confused and indistinct. With brown sugar fished from the open bag and stirred in with the broad butcherknife, it was tossed off with the hunter's toast of, "Luck, boys!" There was not enough to leave unpleasant effects. It put Hatcher in a story-telling, and the rest of the group in a good-natured listening, humor.

Hatcher was always full of stories of an amusing, serious, and often marvellous cast, and we easily persuaded him to recount a few scenes in his wayward, everchanging life. Though he frequently indulged in rough slang, he did not partake of the Westerner's unsubdued nature altogether. I have chosen to select the more strange parts of his conversations, as being the more strikingly illustrative of mountain character. He at times, for his own, as well as our, amusement, would yarn in the most approved *voyageur's* style, or tell the hardest story of sights in his range; in short, Hatcher was *au fait* in everything appertaining to the Far West; whether mimicking a Canadian Frenchman; cowing down a score of Mexicans in fandango row; "lifting" the "hair" of a Pawnee; playing poker for beaver at rendezvous, or trading a robe, or sitting with grave face in Indian council, to smoke the long pipe and

discuss with the aborigines the many grievances to which they consider themselves subject by the innovations of the whites or the rapaciousness and cruelties of their enemies of their own copper complexion.

"Hatch, old hos! hyar's the coon as would like to hear of the time you seed the old gentleman. You's the one as *savys* all 'bout them diggin's."

"Well, Louy, sence you ask it, and as Garmon's aguardiente is good, I don't care ef I do tell that yarn; but it's mity long."

"What one is that?" asked Garmon.

"Why, the old beaver says as how he was in hell once—eh, Hatch?"

"Sartain! this old hos wasn't any whar else—wagh!" replied Hatcher to Louy's doubting remark: "an' I tellee, it's me kin tell the yarn."

He kept the pipe in his mouth, the stem hard held between the teeth, using his hands and knife to cut from a solid plug of "Missouri manufactured" a fresh pipe of strong tobacco. His eyes were fast fixed on an imaginary object in the yellow-pine blaze, and his face indicated a concentration of thought to call back important items for the forthcoming incongruous story, attractive by reason of its improbability—interesting in the manner of delivery.

"Well!" taking a puff at his pipe to deepen fire, "it's me as had been to Fort William (Bent's Fort) to get powder, Galena, an' a few contraptions, one beginning of robe season. I stuck around, waitin' for my possibles, which Holt was fixin' for me. Only a small train was from the States, an' goods were high—two plews[1] a plug for bacca, three fur powder, an' so on. Jim Finch, as went under on the 'Divide,' told me thar was lots of beaver on the

[1]*Plew*—A beaverskin (French *plus*).

Purgatoire. Nobody knowed it; they think the creek's cleared. At the kanyon, three suns from the fort, I sot my traps. I was by myself; but you know beaver's not to be trapped by two—they're shy as a coyote as runs round camp to gnaw a rope, or steal an *apishamore*. I'll be darned if ten Injuns didn't come screechin' rite onter me. I *cached*—I did—an' the niggurs made for the prairie with my animals. I tellee, this hos was *fawch'e* (mad); but he kept dark fur an hour. I heerd a trampin' in the bushes, an' in breaks my little gray mule. Thinks I, them Rapahoes aint smart; so I tries her to grass. But the Injuns had skeered the beaver, an' I stays in camp, eatin' *parflêche* and lariat. Now I 'gan to feel wolfish an' squeamish, an' somthin' was pullin' an' gnawin' at my innards like a wolf in a trap. Jest then an idee struck me, that I'd been hyar afore, tradin' liquor to the Yutes.[1]

"I looked round fur sign, and hurraw fur the mountains, if I didn't find the *cache*. An' now, if this hos hasn't kissed the rock as was pecked with his butcherknife to mark the place, he's ongrateful. Maybe the gravel wasn't scratched up from that cache some! an' me, as would have given my traps fur 'old bull,' rolled in the arwardenty—wagh!"

"I was weaker 'an a goat in the spring; but when the Touse was opened, I fell back, an' let it run in. In four swallers I 'cluded to pull up stakes fur the head waters of Purgatoire for meat. I roped old Blue, tied on my traps, an' left.

"It used to be the best place in the mountains fur meat—me an' Bill Williams has made it come—but nothin' was in sight. Things looked mity strange, an' I wanted to make back track; 'but,' sez I, 'hyar I are, doesn't turn, surely.'"

---

[1] *Yutes*—Utes, a tribe of Indians, previously mentioned.

"The bushes was scorched an' curled, an' the cedar was like fire had been put to it. The brown rocks was covered with black smoke, an' the little drink in the bottom of the kanyon was dried up. We was now most under the old twin peaks of Wah-to-yah; the cold snow on top looked mity cool an' refreshin'.

"Somethin' was wrong; I must be shovin' backards, an' that afore long, or I'll go under; an' I jerked the rein, but I'll be doggone—an' it's true as there's meat a runnin'—Blue kept goin' forrad. I laid back, an' cussed an' kicked till I saw blood, sartain; an' I put out my hand fur my knife to kill the beast, but the Green River wouldn't come. I tellee some onvisible sperit had a paw thar, an' it's me as says it—bad 'medicine' it was that trappin' time.

"Loosin' my pistol—the one traded at 'Big Horn, from Suckeree Tomblow, time I lost my Yute squaw—an' primin' my rifle, I swore to keep rite on; fur, after stayin' ten year, that's past, in these mountains, to be fooled this way wasn't the game fur me, nohow.

"Well, we—I say 'we,' fur Blue was some—good as a man any day; I could talk to her, an' she'd turn her head as ef she onderstood me. Mules are knowin' critters—next thing to human. At a sharp corner, Blue snorted an' turned her head but couldn't go back. Thar in front was a level kanyon, with walls of black an' brown gray stone, an' stumps of burnt pinyon hung down ready to fall onter us; an' as we passed, the rocks and trees shook an' grated an' creaked. All at oncet Blue tucked tail, backed her ears, bowed her neck, an' whinnied rite out, a-rarin' onto her hind legs, a pawin' an' snickerin'. This hos doesn't see the

cute of them notions; he's fur examinin', so I goes to jump off to lam the fool; but I was stuck tight as ef tar was to the saddle. I took my gun—that ar iron," (pointing to his rifle, leaning against a tree), "an' pops Blue over the head, but she squealed an' dodged, all the time pawin'; but 'twasn't no use, an' I says, 'you didn't cost moren two blankets when you was traded from the Yutes, an' two blankets aint worth more'n six plews at Fort William, which comes to *dos pesos* a pair, you consarned ugly picter—darn you, anyhow!' Jest then I heerd a laffin'. I looked up, an' two black critters—they wasn't human, sure, fur they had tails an' red coats (Injun cloth like that traded to the Navyhoes), edged with shiny white stuff, an' brass buttons.

"They kem forrad an' made two low bows. I felt fur my scalpknife (fur I thought they was 'proaching to take me), but I couldn't use it—they were so darned polite.

"One of the devils said, with a grin an' bow, 'Good mornin', Mr. Hatcher?'

" 'H—!' sez I, 'how do you know me? I swar this hos never saw you afore.'

" 'Oh! we've expected you a long time,' said the other, 'and we are quite happy to see you—we've known you ever since your arrival in the mountains.'

"I was gittin' sorter scared. I wanted a drop of arwerdenty mity bad, but the bottle was gone, an' I looked at them in astonishment, an' said,—'The devil!'

" 'Hush!' screamed one, 'you must not say that here—keep still, you will see him presently.'

"I felt streaked, an' cold sweat broke out all over me. I tried to say my prayers, as I used to at home when they made me turn in at night—

'Now I lay me down to sleep—
Lan'lord fill the flowin' bowl.'

"P'shaw! I'm off agin, I can't say it; but if this child could have got off his animal, he'd tuk 'har', and gone the trail fur Purgatoire.

"All this time the long-tailed devils was leadin' my animal (an' me on top of her, the biggest fool dug out) up the same kanyon. The rocks on the sides was pecked as smooth as a beaverplew rubbed with the grain, an' the ground was covered with bits of cedar, like a cavyard of mules had been nippin' an' scatterin' 'em about. Overhead it was roofed; leastwise it was dark in thar, an' only a little light come through holes in the rock. I thought I knew whar we was an' eeched awfully to talk, but I sot still an' didn't ax questions.

"Presently we were stopped by a dead wall—no opening anywhar. When the devils turned from me, I jerked my head around quick, but thar was no place to get out—the wall had growed up ahind us too. I was mad, an' I wasn't mad nuther, fur I expected the time had come fur this child to go under. So I let my head fall onter my brest, an' I pulled the old wool hat over my eyes an' thought for the last of the beaver I had trapped, an' the buffler as had took my G'lena pills in thar livers, an' the 'poker' an' 'euker' I'd played to rendevoo an' Fort William. I felt cumfortable as eatin' 'fat cow' to think I hadn't cheated any one.

"All at once the kanyon got bright as day. I looked up, an' thar was a room with lights, an' people talkin' an' laffin,' an' fiddles a screechin'. Dad an' the preacher to Wapakonetta told me the fiddle was the Devil's invention; I believe it now.

"The little feller as had hold of my animal, squeaked out—'Get off your mule, Mr. Hatcher!'

" 'Get off!' sez I, for I was mad as a bull pecked with Comanche lances, fur his disturbin' me, 'Get off? I have been trying to ever since I came in this infernal hole.'

" 'You can do so now. Be quick, for the company is waitin',' sez he, piert-like.

"They all stopped talkin' an' were lookin' rite at me. I felt riled. 'Darn your company. I've got to lose my scalp anyhow, an' no difference to me how soon—but to obleege ye'—so I slid off as easy as ef I'd never been stuck.

"A hunchback boy, with little gray eyes way in his head, took old Blue away. I might never see her agin, an' I shouted—'Poor Blue; Good-bye Blue!'

"The young devil snickered; I turned around mity starn—'Stop your laffin', you hellcat—ef I am alone, I can take you,' an' I grabs fur my knife to wade into his liver; but, it was gone—gun, bulletpouch, an' pistol—like mules in a stampede.

"I stepped forrad with a big feller, with har frizzled out like an old buffler's just afore sheddin' time, an' the people jawin' worse 'an a cavyard of parokeets, stopped, while Frizzly shouted:

" 'Mr. Hatcher, formerly of Wapakonetta,[1] latterly of the Rocky Mountains!'

"Well, thar I stood. Things was mity strange, an' every darned niggur on 'em looked so pleased like. To show 'em manners, I said—'How are ye!' an' I went to bow, but chaw my last 'bacca ef I could, my britches was so tight—the heat way back in the kanyon had shrunk them. They were too polite to notice it, an' I felt fur my knife to rip the doggone things, but recollecting the scalp-taker was stolen, I straightens up an' bows my head. A kind-lookin' smallish old gentleman with a black

[1] *Wapakoneta*—County seat of Auglaize County, Ohio.

coat and britches, an' a bright, cute face, an' gold spectacles, walks up an' pressed my hand softly—

" 'How do you do, my dear friend? I have long expected you. You cannot imagine the pleasure it gives me to meet you at home. I have watched your peregrinations in the busy, tiresome world with much interest. Sit down, sit down; take a chair,' an' he handed me one."

"I squared myself on it, but a ten-pronged buck wasn't done sucking when I last sot on a cheer, an I squirmed awhile, oneasy as a gut-shot coyote. I jumps up an' tells the old gentleman them sort of 'state fixins,' didn't suit this beaver, an' he prefers the floor. I sets cross-legged like in camp as easy as eatin' *boudin.* I reached for my pipe—a feller's so used to it—but the devils in the kanyon had cached it too."

" 'You wish to smoke, Mr. Hatcher?—we will have cigars. Here!!' he called to an imp near him, 'some cigars.'

"They was brought on a waiter, size of my bullet-bag. I empties 'em in my hat, for good cigars ain't to be picked upon on the peraira every day, but lookin' at the old man, I saw somethin' was wrong. To be polite, I ought to have taken but one.

" 'I beg pardon,' says I, scratchin' my old scalp. 'this hos didn't think—he's been so long in the mountains, he forgets civilized doins', an' I shoves the hat to him.

" 'Never mind,' says he, wavin' his hand, an' smiling' faintly, 'get others,' speakin' to the boy aside him.

"The old gentleman took one, and touched his finger to the end of my cigar—it smoked as if fire had been sot to it.

" 'Wagh! the devil!' screams I, drawin' back.

" 'The same,' chimed in he, biting off the little end of his'n, an' bowlin' an' spittin' it out—'the same, sir.'

" 'The same! what?'

" 'Why—the Devil.'

" 'H---! This ain't the holler tree for this coon—I'll be makin' medicin'; so I offers my cigar to the sky, an' to the earth, like Injun.'

" 'You must not do that here—out upon such superstition,' says he, sharplike.

" 'Why?'

" 'Don't ask so many questions—come with me,' risin' to his feet, an' walkin' off slow, a blowin' his cigar smoke, over his shoulder in a long line, an' I gets alongside of him. 'I want to show you my establishment—you did not expect to find this down here, eh?'

"My britches was stiff with the all-fired heat in the kanyon, an' my friend seein' it, said, 'your breeches are tight; allow me to place my hand on them.'

"He rubbed his fingers up an' down once, an' by beaver, they got as soft as when I traded them from Pi Yutes on the Heely (you mind, Louv, my Yute squaw; old Cutlips, her boss, came with us far as Sangry Christy goldmine. She's the squaw that dressed them skins).

"I now felt as brave as a butterfly in spring. The old man was so clever, an' I walked 'longside like a 'quaintance. We stopped afore a stone door, an' it opened without touchin'.

" 'Hyar's damp powder, an' no fire to dry it,' shouts I, stoppin'.

" 'What's the matter—do you not wish to perambulate through my possessions?'

" 'This hos doesn't savy what the "human" for

perambulate is; but I'll walk plum to the hottest fire in your settlement, if that's all you mean.'

"The place was hot, an' smelt bad of brimstone; but the darned screechin' took me. I walks up to other end of the 'lodge,' an' steal my mule, if thar wasn't Jake Beloo[1], as trapped with me to Brown's Hole![2] A lot of hellcats was a pullin' at his ears, an' jumpin' on his shoulders, a swingin' themselves to the ground by his long har. Some was runnin' hot irons in him, but when we came up, they went off in a corner a-laffin' and talkin' like wildcats' gibberish on a cold night.

"Poor Jake! he came to the bar, lookin' like a sick buffler in the eye. The bones stuck through the skin, an' his har was matted an' long—all over jest like a blind bull, an' white blisters spotted him, with water runnin' out of 'em. 'Hatch, old feller, you here, too?—how are ye?' says he, in a faintlike voice, staggerin' an' catchin' on to the bar fur support—'I'm sorry to see you here, what did you'—he raised his eyes to the old man standin' ahind me, who gave him such a look he went howlin' an' foamin' at the mouth to the fur eend of the den an' fell down, rollin' over the damp stones. The devils, who was chucklin' by a furnis whar was irons a heatin', approached easy an run one into his back. I jumped at 'em and hollered, 'You owdacious little hellpups, let him alone; ef my sculptaker was hyar, I'd make buzzard feed of your meat, an' *parfleche* of your dogskins,' but they squealed out to 'go to the devil.'"

"'Wagh!' says I, 'ef I ain't pretty close to his lodge, I'm a niggur!'

---

[1]*Jake Belew*—A trapper.

[2]*Brown's Hole*—small valley in the mountains of Colorado.

"The old gentleman speaks up, 'Take care of yourself, Mr. Hatcher,' in a mity soft, kind voice, an' he smiled so calm an' devilish—it nigh on froze me. I thought ef the ground would open with a yairthquake an' take me in, I'd be much obleeged anyhow. Think's I—you saint-forsaken, infernal hell-chief, how I'd like to stick my knife in your withered old breadbasket.

" 'Ah, my dear fellow, no use in tryin'—that is a decided impossibility'—I jumped ten feet. I swar, a 'medicine' man couldn't a heerd me, for my lips didn't move; an' how he knew is more'n this hos kin tell.

" 'Evil communications corrupt good manners. But I see your nervous equilibrium is destroyed—come with me.'

"At tother side, the old gentleman told me to reach down for a brass knob. I thought a trick was goin' to be played on me, an' I dodged.

" 'Do not be afraid; turn it when you pull—steady there—that's it'—it came, an' a door, too. He walked in. I followed while the door shut of itself.

" 'Mity good hinges!' sez I, 'don't make a noise, an' go shut without slammin' an' cussin' 'em.'

" 'Yes—yes! some of my own importation; no! they were made here.'

"It was dark at first, but when the other door opened, thar was too much light. In another room was a table in the middle with two bottles an' little glasses like them to the Saint Louy drink houses, only prettier. A soft, thick carpet was on the floor—an' a square glass lamp hung from the ceiling. I sat cross-legged on the floor, an' he on a sofy, his feet cocked on a chair, an' his tail quoiled under him, cumfortable as traders in a lodge. He hollered somethin' I couldn't make out, an' in comes two

black, crooked-shank devils, with a round bench on one leg, an' a glass with cigars in it. They *vamoosed* an' the old coon invited me to take a cigar, helped himself, an' rared his head back while I sorter lays on the floor, an' we smoked an' talked.

"We was speakin' of the size of the apple Eve ate, an' I said thar were none but crabapples until we grafted them, but he replied thar was good fruit until the flood. Then Noah was so hurried to git the yelaphants, pinchin' bugs, an' sich varmint aboard, he forgot good appleseed until the water got knee-deep, so he jumps out, gathers a lot of our sour crabs, crams 'em in his pockets, an' Shem pulled him with a rope in the ark agin.

"I got ahead of him several times, an' he sez—'Do you really believe the preachers, with their smooth faces, upturned eyes, and whining cant?'

"'Certainly I do! cause they're mity kind and good to the poor.'

"'Why I had no idea you were so ignorant—I assuredly expected more from so sensible a man as you.'

"'Now, look'ee hyar, this child isn't used to be abused to his own face—I—I tell'ee it's mity hard to choke down—ef it ain't, sculp me!'

"'Keep quiet, my young friend, suffer not your temper to gain the mastery; let patience have its perfect work. I beg your pardon sincerely—and so you believe the Bible, and permit the benighted preachers to gull you unsparingly. Come now! What is the reason you imagine faith in the Bible is the work to take you to Heaven?'

"'Well, don't crowd me an' I'll think a little—why, it's the oldest history anyhow; so they told me at home. I used to read it myself, old hos—this child did. It tells how the first man an' his

squaw got hyar, an' the buffler, an' antelope, an' beaver, an' hosses too. An' when I see it on the table, somethin' ahind my ribs thumps out: "Look, John, thar's a book you must be mity respectful to," an' somehow, I believe it's more'n human, an' I tell'ee its agin natur to believe otherwise, wagh!'

"Another thing the old gentleman mentioned I thought was pretty much the fact. When he said he fooled Eve an' walked about, I said it was a snake what deceived the ole 'oman.

" 'Nonsense! snake indeed! I can satisfactorily account for that—but why think you so?'

" 'Because the big Bibles, with picters, has a snake coiled in an appletre, pokin' out his tongue at Adam's squaw.'

" 'P'shaw! The early inhabitants were so angry to think that Satan could deceive their first mother and entail so much misery on them, that at a meeting to which the principal men attended, they agreed to call me a serpent, because a serpent can insinuate himself so easily. When Moses compiled the different narratives of the earlier times in his five books, he wrote it so, too. It is typical, merely, of the wiles of the devil—my humble self'—an' the old coon bowed, 'and an error, it seems, into which the whole world, since Moses, has irretrievably fallen. But have we not been sitting long enough? Take a fresh cigar, an' we will walk. That's Purgatory where your *quondam* friend, Jake Beloo, is. He will remain there a while longer, and if you desire it, can go, though it cost much exertion to entice him here, and then only after he drank hard.'

" 'I wish you would, sir. Jake's as good a *companyero* as ever trapped beaver, or gnawed poor

bull in spring, an' he treated his squaw as ef she was a white woman.'

"'For your sake, I will; we may see others of your acquaintance before leaving this,' sez he, sorter queer-like, as if to say—'No doubt of it.'

"The door of the room we had been talkin' in, shut of its own accord. We stopped, an' he touchin' a spring in the wall, a trapdoor flew open, showin' a flight of steps. He went first, cautioning me not to slip on the dark sta'rs; but I shouted 'not to mind me, but thankee for tellin' it though.'

"We went down, an' down, an' down, till I 'gan to think the old cuss was goin' to get me safe, too, so I sung out—'Hello! which way? We must be mity nigh under Wah-to-yah, we've been goin' on so long.'

" 'Yes!' sez he, much astonished, 'We're just under the twins[1]. Why, turn and twist you ever so much you lose not your reckoning.'

" 'Not by a long chalk! this child had his bringin' up to Wapakonetta, an' that's a fact.'

"From the bottom we went on in a dampish, dark sort of passage, gloomily lit up, with one candle. The grease was runnin' down the block as had an augerhole bored in it for a candlestick, an' the long snuff to the eend was red, an' the blaze clung to it as ef it hated to part company, an' turned black, an' smoked at the p'int in mournin'. The cold chills shook me, an' the old gentleman kept so still, the echo of my feet rolled back to me hollow an' solemn. I wanted liquor mity bad—mity bad.

"Thar was a noise smothered-like, an' some poor feller would cry out worse 'an Comanches chargin'.

---

[1]*The Twin Mountains, Wah-to-yah*—Indian name for the Spanish Peaks in Southern Colorado, within San Isabel National Forest.

A door opened, and the old gentleman touchin' me on the back, I went in, an' he followed. It flew to, an' though I turned rite around to look fur sign to 'scape ef the place got too hot, I couldn't find it.

" 'Wa-agh!' sez I.

" 'What now, are you dissatisfied?'

" 'Oh, no! I was just lookin' to see what sort of lodge you have.'

" 'I understand you perfectly, sir—be not afraid.'

"My eyes were blinded in the light, but rubbin' 'em, I saw two big snakes comin' at me, thar yaller an' blood-shot eyes shinin' awfully, an' thar big red tongues dartin' back an' forad, like a painter's paw, when he slaps in on a deer, an' thar wide jaws open, showin' long, slim, white fangs. On my right, four ugly animals jumped at me an' rattled ther chains—I swar, ther heads were bigger 'an a buffler's in summer. The snakes hissed an' the dogs howled, an' growled, an' charged, an' the light from the furnis flashed out brighter an' brighter; an' above me an' around me, a hundred devils yelled, an' laffed, an' swore, an' spit, an' snapped ther bony fingers in my face, an' leaped up to the ceiling into the black, long spiderwebs, an' rode on the spiders bigger 'an a powderhorn, an' jumped off onter my head. Then they all formed in line, an' marched, an' hooted, an' yelled; an' when the snakes jined the percession, the devils leaped on thar backs an' rode. Then some smaller ones rocked up an' down on springin' boards, and when the snakes kem opposite, darted way up in the room an' dived down in their mouths screechin' like so many Pawnees for sculps. When the snakes was in front of us, the little devils came to the end of the snakes' tongues, laffin', an' dancin', an' singin' like little eediuts. Then the big dogs jumped clean over us, growlin' louder 'an a

cavyard of grisly b'ar, an' the devils holdin on to thar tails, flopped over my head, screamin'—'We've got you—we've got you at last!'

"I couldn't stand it no longer, an' shuttin' my eyes, I yelled rite out, an groaned.

" 'Be not alarmed,' and my friend drew his fingers along my head an' back, an' pulled a little narrow, black flask from his pocket with—'Take some of this.'

"I swallered a few drops. It tasted sweetish an' bitterish—I don't exactly *savy* how, but soon as it was down, I jumped up five times an' yelled—'Out of the way, you little ones, an' let me ride; an' after runnin' longside, and climbin' up his slimy scales, I got straddle of a big snake, who turned his head around, blowin' his hot, sickenin' breath in my face. I waved my old wool hat, an kickin' him in a fast run, sung out to the little devils to git up behind, an' off we all started, screechin' 'Hooray fur Hell!' The old gentleman rolled over an' bent himself double with laffin' till he putty nigh choked. We kept goin' faster an' faster till I got on to my feet (though the scales were mity slippery) an' danced injun, an' whooped louder than 'em all.

"All at once, the old gentleman stopped laffin', pulled his spectacles down on his nose an' said—'Mr. Hatcher, we had better go now,' an' then he spoke somethin' I couldn't make out, an' the animals all stood still; I slid off, an' the little hellcats a pinchin' my ears, an' pullin' my beard, went off squeakin'. Then they all formed in a halfmoon afore us—the snakes on their tails, with heads way up to the black cobwebby roof; the dogs rared on thar hindfeet, an' the little devils hangin' everywhar. Then they all roared, an' hissed, and screeched

seven times, an' wheelin' off, disappeared, just as the light went out, leaving us in the dark.

" 'Mr. Hatcher,' sez the old gentleman again, movin' off, 'you please amuse yourself until I return,' but seein' me look wild, 'you have seen too much of me to feel alarmed for your own safety. Take this imp fur a guide, an' if he is impertinent, put him through; an' for fear the exhibitions may overcome your nerves, imbibe a portion of this cordial,' which I did, an' everything danced before my eyes, an' I wasn't a bit scairt.

"I started fur a red light as came through the crack of a door, a-stumblin' over a three-legged stool, an' pitchin' my last cigar stump to one of the dogs, chained to the wall, who ketched it in his mouth. When the door was opened by my guide, I saw a big blaze like a peraira on fire—red and gloomy; an' big black smoke was curlin', an' twistin' an' shootin' an' spreadin', and the flames a-lickin' the walls, goin' up to a pint, and breakin' in to a wide blaze, with white an' green ends. Thar was bells a tollin', an' chains a clinkin', an' mad howls an' screams; but the old gentleman's 'medicine' made me feel as independent as a trapper with his animals feedin' round him, two pack of beaver in camp, with traps sot fur more.

"Close to the hot place was a lot of merry devils laffin' an' shoutin' with an' old pack of greasy cards—it 'minded me of them we played with to rendezvoo—shufflin' 'em to 'Devil's Dream,' an' 'Money Musk'; then they 'ud deal in slow time, with 'Dead March in Saul,' whistlin' as solemn as medicine men. Then they broke out of a suddent with 'Paddy O'Rafferty,' which made this hos move about in his moccasins so lively, one of them as was playin', looked up an' sed—'Mr Hatcher, won't

you take a hand—make way, boys, fur the gentleman.'

"Down I sot amongst 'em, but stepped on the little feller's tail, who had been leadin' the Irish jig. He hollered till I got off it—'Owch! but it's on my tail ye are!'

" 'Pardon,' sez 1, 'but you're an Irishman!'

" 'No indeed! I'm a hellimp, he! he! who-oop! I'm a hellimp,' an' he laffed, and pulled my beard, an' screeched till the rest threatened to choke him ef he didn't stop.'

" 'What's trumps?' sez I, 'an' whose deal?'

" 'Here is my place,' sez one, 'I'm tired playin'; take a horn,' handin' me a black bottle, 'the game's poker, an' it's your deal next—there's a bigger game of poker on hand,' an' pickin' up an iron rod heatin' in the fire, he pinched a miserable burnin' feller ahind the bars, who cussed him, an' run way in the blaze outen reach.

"I thought I was great at poker by the way I took the plews an' traps from the boys to rendezvoo, but hyar the slick devils beat me without half tryin'. When they slapped down a bully pair, they 'ud screech an' laff worse 'an fellers on a spree. Sez one—'Mr. Hatcher, I reckon you're a hos at poker away to your country, but you can't shine down here—you are nowhar.'

"Well now, this child felt sorter queer, so he santers 'long slowly, till he saw an' open place in the rock; not mindin' the imps who was drinkin' away like trappers on a bust. It was so dark thar, I felt my way mity still (fur I was afraid they 'ud be after me); I got almost to a streak of light, when thar was sich a rumpus back in the cave as give me the trimbles. Doors was slammin', dogs screamin'. They come a chargin'. The snakes was hissin'

sharp an' wiry; the beasts howled out long an' mournful; an' thunder rolled up overhead, an' the imps was yellin' an screechin' like mad.

"'It's time to break fur timber, sure,' and I run as ef a wounded buffler was raisin' my shirt with his horns. The place was damp, an' in the narrow rock, lizards an' vipers an' copperheads jumped out at me an' clum on my legs, but I stompt an' shook 'em off. Owls, too, flopped thar wings in my face, an' hooted at me, an' fire blazed out an' lit the place up, an' brimstone smoke came nigh on chokin' me. Lookin' back, the whole cavyard of hell was comin' an devils on devils, nothin' but devils, filled the hole.

"I threw down my hat to run faster, an' then jerked off my old blanket, but still they was gainin'. I made one jump clean out of my moccasins. The big snake in front was closer an' closer, with his head drawed back to strike; then a helldog raked up nearly longside, pantin' an' blowin' with the slobber runnin' outen his mouth, an' a lot of devils hangin' on to him, was cussin' me an' screechin.' I strained every jint, but no use; they still gained—not fast—but gainin' they was. I jumped an' swore an' leaned down, flung out my hands, but the dogs was nearer every time, an' the horrid yellin' an' hissin' way back, grew louder an' louder. At last, a prayer, mother used to make me say, that I hadn't thought of fur twenty year or more, came rite afore me clear as a powderhorn. I kept runnin' an' sayin' it, an' the niggurs held back a little. I gained some on them—Wagh! I stopped repeatin', to get breath, an' the foremost dog made such a lunge at me, I forgot it. Turnin' up my eyes, thar was the old gentleman lookin' at me, an' keepin' alongside, without walkin'. His face warn't more than two feet

off, an' his eyes was fixed steady, an' calm, an' devilish. I screamed rite out. I shut my eyes but he was thar, too. I howled an' spit an' hit at it, but couldn't git the darned face away. A dog ketched hold of my shirt with his fangs, an' two devils, jumpin' on me, caught me by the throat, a-tryin' to choke me. While I was pullin' 'em off, I fell down, with about thirty-five of the infernal things, an' the dogs, an' the slimy snakes a top of me, a mashin' an taren' me. I bit big pieces out of them. an' bit an' bit again, an' scratched an' gouged. When I was most give out, I heerd the Pawnee skulp yell, an' I used my rifle fur a pokin' stick; ef it didn't charge a party of the best boys in the mountains. They slayed the devils right an' left, an' sot 'em runnin' like goats, but this hos was so weak fightin' he fainted away. Then I found the liquor, an' my companyeros was slappin' thar wet hats in my face to bring me to. Round whar I was layin', the grass was pulled up an' the ground dug with my knife, and the bottle, cached when I traded with the Yutes, was smashed to flinders 'gainst a tree.

" 'Why, what on airth, Hatcher, have ye bin doin' hyar? You was a-kickin' an' tearin' up the grass, an' yellin' as ef yer "har" was taken. Why, old hos, this coon don't *savy* them hifelutin' notions, he doesn't.'

" 'The devils from hell was after me,' sez I, mity gruff, 'this hos has seen mor'n ever he wants to agin.'

"They tried to git me outen the notion, but I swar, an' I'll stick to it, this child saw a heap more of the all-fired place than he wants to agin; an' ef it ain't fact he doesn't know 'fat cow' from 'poor bull'—wagh!"

So ended Hatcher's tale of Wah-to-yah, or what the mountaineer saw when he had the *mania potu.*

RUINS OF BENT'S OLD FORT

CHAPTER XX

The Farm

Our route in the morning was the same trail by which we entered Taos. Long hills gave hard work to our mules, who, panting and in single file—a miniature caravan—patiently toiled; and we, slowly following, cheered them with snatches of merry song. In a mountainous country such as this, the absence of mules would be a serious drawback to trade; for the Indian horses, though of compact build and inured to a scanty subsistence of grass, cannot bear up under the severe fatigue attendant on such journeys.

Once more on the prairie, we experienced a feeling of relief; for the jostling on the uneven pathway, and the cold and snow, gave place to rapid and easy travel. The weather was more genial, and hares starting from the sage bushes enlivened our progress. We made camp before nightfall on El Rayado,[1] a half mile above a party of men whom we did not go near; they, supposing us to be Indians, corralled their animals in haste.

Succeeding a refreshing night's rest by the rippling Rayado, we saddled and packed; a tin cup of coffee and *biscoche* served to break our fast; and, ere the distant Raton gleamed with the dawning light, we were far on our way. Two hours' ride brought us to the bluff, at whose base, a hundred feet below, trickled El Agua Vaca. The same chain on which we stood, converging above and below, so shut out the chill winds, that, this early, the tree-

[1] *El Rayado*—Rayado creek, Colfax county, New Mexico on headwaters of the (South) Canadian River. Kit Carson had a ranch there. An outpost—El Rayado—of Dragoons was there also; now the town Rayado.

dotted streamlet margins upbore the joyous mantle of green blending so harmoniously with the more tardy growth of the swelling hills beyond. A soft cloud of mist, gently overshadowing and gradually retreating, chidingly clung to the topmost tree branches in seeming unwillingness to depart. Through the rugged gorge, at the entrance of this spot, tumbled the foamy brook in rapid descent; then whirling impetuously, it soberly meandered in glassy pools away from the eye, in the intricate windings of the rock. By the still, purling waters, sleek, contented cows pulled the sweet verdure, or quietly reposed; while, hid from them by a jutting point in front, many calves frisked about or basked in the sheltered sunbeams. Embowered in a thicket of dogwood and cedar, at our feet, with huge detached masses of up-reared rock, guardian spirit-like surrounding it, was the humble and romantic adobe of Antonio, the vaquero.

Descending the sliding point, with mules reined back on their haunches, we stopped in the crystal-brown waters, which, murmuring a laughing farewell to the Dryads of the fountain, sped away merrily in the heedless race for the distant plain. Antonio's house was composed of a few logs, merely—altogether not seven feet in height or length; in front was a miniature court; while numerous goats, browsing among the rocks, enhanced the domestic air of El Agua Vaca.

In a corner of the hut we found a bucket of milk; so, *sans ceremonie* (without ceremony), it was hung over the fire with crumbled *biscoche*. While discussing its merit, an object enveloped in a blanket and topped with a tall-peaked, rusty-looking sombrero, rode up on a sorry bay horse. He was armed with huge spurs, lasso, and bow and sword—his *tout*

ensemble cutting such a ridiculous figure, we laughed outright. "*Don Quixote de la Manche,*"[1] thought I, "how came he here?" But it was only Antonio. He was a good Mexican, if any of the nation deserves that prefixing adjective. He asked us concerning his *esposa, muger*—his wife.

An hour more brought us to the Cimarone rancho, where our old *compañeros* welcomed us. They were much pleased with our recital of adventures in El Valle de Taos.

Hatcher and William Bent had made preparations for farming in the Purgatoire Valley, below the crossing of the Santa Fe trail.[2] Hatcher was to take the company's mules, horses, and cows to the farm. For two days we were busied in separating the United States stock from ours; and in the afternoon of the third, with Tibeau for wagon driver, and Louy Simonds, Antonio, and myself, Hatcher turned his face to the Raton. Staying on the Cimarone that night, we passed the following *jornada* in monotous cattle driving. The weather was warm, and calves, worn down with walking, were hauled in the wagon; but considerable chasing and final lassoing were necessary to capture the young brutes ere they submitted to the unceremonious hoisting. At night the *Vermejo* afforded water, and a grove of willows, hard by, shelter and fuel. With milk, *biscoche,* beef, and coffee, we enjoyed ourselves; for when mountaineers have plenty to eat, they are cheerful; but, in starving times, wagh!—an old bear is better company.

The succeeding morning, a calf, preferring the shade of the willows to the hot sun, and evading all

---

[1] *Don Quixote de la Mancha*—Hero of Cervantes' novel of that name—a quaint cavalier.

[2] In Colorado.

attempts at capture, Hatcher sent a ball through it. His was a short, heavy rifle, the stock unvarnished; and, when he brought it to his face, the game most always came. He was the best shot within my knowledge.

The rifle I brought from the States proving too light for this windy country, I exchanged it with Garmon for a long, heavy one, whole-stocked, and the barrel fastened to its place with one iron and two wooden pegs. At the guard the stock had been accidentally broken short off, and was secured again with a strip of skin, warm from a buffalo's flank, sewed on with sinew and awl. Seven years before it came into my possession, Louy Simonds, while trapping on the northern lakes, in a hand-to-hand conflict with a black bear, shattered the old stock. An ingenious Dutchman made a new one with a hatchet, drawing and pocket knife, of a piece of curled maple, which had been riven by lightning. The same stock still remained; and the associations connected with it, together with its qualities as a shooting iron and its antiquated appearance, made it a favorite with me.

The sun was setting as we turned from the trail and unsaddled in a horseshoe bend of El Rio Canadiano, near a grove of cottonwoods. The oxen were unyoked, the droves directed to water, and the cows milked. When night overshadowed the scene, we sat on outspread blankets close to the fire, with "a heap" inside, and pipe in mouth, enjoying our ease with dignity.

This section of country I have often heard spoken of as uninteresting; but to me there were many attractions. Here, with mule and gun, and a few faithful friends, one experiences such a grand sensation of liberty and a total absence of fear: no-

body to say what one shall do; costumed as fancy, or comfort, dictates; one's blanket, one's house; the prairie; one's home—money he needs not, except to buy coffee, ammunition, and "Touse."[1] No conventional rules of society restrict him to any particular form of dress, manner, or speech—he can swear a blue streak, or pray; it is his own affair entirely. Here, too, one soon learns to say nothing, and do less, but for himself, and the greenhorn is often reminded amid showers of maledictions, to confine his philanthropic deeds and conversations to his own dear self. I was quite amused by the kindly intentioned remarks of an old mountaineer to me, shortly after my appearance in the country: "If you see a man's mule running off, don't stop it—let it go; it isn't yourn. If his possible sack falls off, don't tell him of it; he'll find it out. At camp, help cook—get wood and water—make yourself active—get your pipe, and smoke it—don't ask too many questions, and you'll pass!"

The cattle were too fat to travel fast, and their heated tongues lolled out as they pantingly walked along. We were in motion the entire day, for water was not to be procured; and, when the sun's intense rays were diverted by a range of isolated hills, we joyfully hailed the approach of evening. The mountain which we were nearing was rough; its pine-clad sides grew black with the shades of night. To the south the chain was continued till lost in the uncertain twilight. Hatcher, who had been reconnoitering for water in a canyon two miles to the east, returned unsuccessful. Scarcely before dark we stopped on a graceful rivulet. The cattle—a hundred in number—scenting the water, ran bellow-

---

[1] *Touse*—"Taos Lightning"—the beverage manufactured at San Fernandez de Taos.

ing and goring one another in the struggle: the *caballada* galloped up the bed of the stream, making the water unfit for our throats. The cows lowed for their calves, who, in turn, bleated most lustily; the mules squealed and kicked, while we shouted and clubbed them off our camp and saddles. It was a grand concert, each one playing his own tune. But soon the uneasy juveniles were industriously nudging at swelling teats in silence, and the mules ranging the hillsides.

Building a fire near the brook, we were quietly seated by the blazing logs—the meat cooking, and the mouth of the *biscoche* bag convenient. The *biscoche* occupied the center of the circle when we ate, and in the total absence of plates, the leg doubled up, served, except when the meat was too hot; then a rock, chip, or anything handy, interposed. Indeed, we have used dry buffalo chips on the plain, instead of the more agreeable delft.

That night parched coffee gave out. We had nothing in which to burn more; but, as necessity is ever the mother of invention, we selected two flat stones from the channel at hand, twenty-five to thirty inches in diameter, which we placed on the fire till heated; then one was taken off, the coffee poured on, and stirred with a stick. The stones served alternately as they became cool. When the coffee was sufficiently burned, a piece of skin was laid on the ground, and a clean stone, a foot in diameter, rested on the knees of the grinder, with one edge on the skin. A smaller stone, held in the hand, reduced the grains between it and the larger one, to powder, by a rotary motion.

The cattle were in better plight on resuming the journey. Further up the pass we found a camp of United States teamsters, their wagons and position

in unison with their character—strung a long the road for two hundred yards. A half-dozen Apaches[1] could have scalped the men and robbed the wagons with impunity.

We passed without stopping, and at a steep hill near, we dismounted, to put our shoulders to the wagonwheel. Returning to the train, I galloped up to our party again, with a piece of mess pork for which I gave one dollar. A little salt meat with an abundance of fresh, was palatable. The continued use of the "salt" too plainly showed in the teamsters' sallow countenances. Their Purgatoire encampment had quite a large graveyard attached—comrades of the survivors in the Raton.

A mile beyond, we came upon a group of three men cooking, the leader of whom was a man known from the Yellowstone to El Rio Bravo, from Salt Lake to Sangre de Christo, from Santa Fe to Missouri—the shrewd, independent Jim Beckwith.[2] He claimed parentage on the maternal side from one who, in childhood, played 'neath the palmtrees, in the golden sands displaced by "Africa's sunny fountains"—and, on the paternal, from a slip reared among the vine-clad hills of *La Belle France,* and transplanted in reluctant haste on the western shore of the great Mississippi.

While yet a boy, Beckwith ran from St. Louis with a trapping party, who, with dollars and beaver galore, stalked the thoroughfares of the then-frontier town, in pardonable pride and consequence. After much buffeting to the headwaters of Yellow-

---

[1]*Apaches* (Enemies)—Here Jicarilla are meant, as they inhabited this portion of New Mexico.

[2]*Beckwith* (Beckworth)—Author of *Bonner's Life* and *Adventures of James P. Beckwith* (New York, 1856), a largely fictitious account of life in the West.

stone, he took a wife with the Crow Indians,[1] and to that nation attached himself—joining their war-parties with alacrity, dancing around the scalp trophies, and making trades of his squaw's well-dressed robes to the fur companies.

But what white man was ever long constant to his Indian nymph, or Mexican *muchacha?* Jim Beckwith, ere many moons, found himself traversing the prairie-skirted Black, Sweetwater, Wet, and other noted mountains; now trapping beaver on Bijou Creek;[2] now "fetching" the goats from Pike's toppling crags; and now again at Greenhorn settlement, "raking" the "plews" from the less fortunate euchre and poker players, who after solitary sojourns for months in their favorite haunts, emerge and "make" for rendezvous, to revel in the pleasures of intoxicating forgetfulness, and to dance in a rude but genuine way with the laughing squaws and thoughtless *señoritas.*

In Santa Fe last winter, Beckwith kept the best-furnished saloon in the place—the grand resort for liquor-imbibing, monte-playing, and fandango-disposed American officers and men.

He was a large, good-humored fellow; and while listening to the characteristic colloquy, I almost forgot that he was of a race, who, in the much-boasted land of liberty, are an inferior, degraded people. With their *caballada,* we found a horse of of Mr. St. Vrain, which we drove to our own band, without previous by'r leave, or a single compliment

---

[1]*Crow Indians* (Absarok'a)—a Siouan tribe of Plains Indians, closely related to the Hidatsa, ranging in Wyoming and Montana on the headwaters of the Yellowstone and around the Bighorn Mountains, where they still remain.

[2]*Bijou* (Bijeau)—Creek east of the mountains, in Colorado, tributary to the South Platte. Named for a trapper killed on its banks.

to Jim's honesty. Hatcher thought that the party was upon a horse-stealing expedition, to which propensity, however, in the mountains, small blame should be imputed.

By noon we stood on the dividing ridge of the Raton. On reaching the Purgatoire valley, an object like a buffalo was descried beyond the stream. Louy went over; an ox, attenuated by hunger and hard work, looked mournfully up to him as he rode in front. "Poor buffler!" said he, as he joined us again, leaving the solitary vagrant to pick, unmolested, the scanty herbage.

It was a beautiful April afternoon, in which we journeyed down the Purgatoire, and halted by a snow-supplied rill, whose springing waters invited us to rest our wearied limbs by its side. The *caballada* crowding forward and slaking their thirst, betook themselves to the crispy hill grass. A few sticks were gathered, flint and steel produced; and, as the smoke curled languidly upward from the Indian-fashioned fire, we partook of the same insouciant feeling, and reclined on the warm ground with eyes half-closed, solacing ourselves with the blessed pipe.

The sun was yet above the Raton, which, with its escarpment of gray, time-worn rock, frowned upon us. Hatcher, who had been talking of grizzly bear, proposed to take a hunt, "for," he said, "this child savy's a heap 'bout them. It's more nor ten year sence I've drawed 'bead' on antelope an 'blacktail,' and ef some meat as is meat hasn't 'come'—wagh! Away to the buttes, yonder, b'ar gangs plenty, an' this hos is fur some afore *veheo esevone*—Whiteman's buffalo—goes in his meat-bag agin"—an' so soliloquizing, he picked up his "Bullthrower," as he fondly termed his rifle, with—"Hyar's for them

buttes," pointing to some isolated hills, two miles to the south from camp, "b'ar's out playin' like shian *ki kun* (children)."

Louy Simonds, jumping up with his ever-ready gun, knocked the ashes from his pipe; and, depositing it in a small leather pouch strung from his neck, black and greasy with time and perspiration, exclaimed,—"This child never stuck around camp when work's on hand—hosguard, meat huntin', it's all the same to him; this 'mudhook,' holding out his foot, "hasn't a moccasin on for nuthin', an' that's a fact!"

"Say! my young Shian trader, you's the chap what stayed with John Smith last winter; ef you're for b'ar, grab your lightnin'-stock (my rifle) and make 'Pimo' tracks for yon butte. (I had a pair of Pimo Indian moccasins on, a present from Hatcher, who was then talking to me). "Away down to the Pimo country, nigh about Heela (Gila) they make the best Injun shoe this coon ever put his foot in—well, hyar's for meat;" and off he started, Louy and myself in his wake.

The plain was covered with a low, spreading growth cactus, and we continually had to cast an eye to our feet to avoid trampling on the bristling spines.

"Keep your eye skinned," said Hatcher, in a tone of warning, "them prickly pear is worse by a long chalk, than nettles I used to see to Wapakonetta settlement. When I was no higher 'an old 'Bull-thrower' here," touching his gun with his free hand, "I sometimes went out hunting with my old man —he was a keener at squirrels an' woodpeckers, an' so tall I had to rare back to look in his face, as tall as the cedars of Lebanon old Cormon talked about."

Within some hundred feet of the buttes, toward

which, with elastic step, we had been advancing, while listening to one of Hatcher's yarns, a band of nine deer sprung from a hollow, bounding along, with heads high in air. Simultaneously our rifle reports rang out in the still afternoon; the graceful animals, frightened into greater speed, disappeared behind the rise. We now commenced the ascent of the hill, catching hold of bushes and rocks to assist us up its rugged front. Bending forward and cautiously proceeding, we walked under the trees, searching for fresh "sign" among the huge beartracks. *Caching* ourselves behind some detached fragments of coarse sandstone, we, in a low tone, conversed while scanning the outstretched plain for the anticipated game.

Beneath us lay a gently undulating valley, destitute of trees, which, swelling and receding, blended itself into handsome slopes beyond, covered with scrubby pine. At one side, removed a short distance, rose an easy eminence carpeted with grass and studded with groves of cedar and piñon, seemingly tended by other hands than those of Nature.

With eyes half-closed, I fancied myself in the shady orchards, far away to the East, among venerable trees, never again to be reposed under with the same boyish pleasure. Interposed in groups among the low clumps were bands of deer and antelope; some lying down, others cropping the tender blades of spring grass, and others skipping about unconscious of danger. The waning sun shooting streams of mellow light through the dark-green foliage, formed a constant change of scenery and tinged the valley with a sea of golden light, subduing the rougher features, and harmonizing the whole.

In silence we enjoyed the delectable picture of peace and innocence, unwilling to fright the grace-

ful herds with deadly rifle, or even with rude, but harmless, shout. To the north rose Las Cumbres Españolas, whose snow-wreathed crests glittering, the brightest gem of Nature's tiara in the Sierra Blanca[1], seemed to touch the sky. To the west, somber-hued Raton loomed up as the orb of day disappeared beyond. Rousing from the reverie, we retraced our steps, with yet another look.

While at supper, a party of men rode up, the foremost of whom shook hands with Hatcher. It was the renowned Kit Carson,[2] so celebrated as the companion and guide of Colonel Fremont[3]. Without a desire to detract from Carson's well-earned fame, I can say, in genuine good feeling and full belief, that there are numbers of mountain men, though to the reading world little known, as fearless and as expert as he whose prowess in scalptaking and beaver-trapping is the theme of many campfires, and the highest admiration of younger mountaineers.

Lieutenant Beale,[4] United States Navy, Lieutenant Talbot, California Battalion, and several men dressed in California costume, composed the rest

---

[1]*Sierra Blanca*—White Range, in Otero and Lincoln counties, New Mexico. Here apparently used for the mountains to the north, in Colorado.

[2]*Kit Carson* (1809-1868)—Most celebrated of the trappers, Indian-fighters, soldiers, scouts, of the Southern Plains. Born in Kentucky, he made his home in Missouri until sixteen years of age. After that his life was spent in the wilderness, while his family remained at Taos. A man of blameless character—cool, courageous, truthful, energetic. Sabin's *Kit Carson Days* is his most complete biography.

[3]*Fremont, General John Charles* (1813-1890)—Official explorer of the West, leading fighter and military governor of California. U. S. senator.

[4]*Lieut. Edward Fitzgerald Beale* (b. 1822)—hero, with Kit Carson, of the relief of Kearny at San Pascual, California.

of Carson's party.[1] The high-pommelled saddles, large live-oak stirrups, and huge iron spurs, a few inlaid with silver, the rowels four and five inches in diameter, formed a unique appearance.

In the morning we gathered the stock, and lassoed the riding animals. My large beast, Diabolique (for never mule gave more trouble), was refractory owing in some degree to the unusual quantity of good grass the preceding night. After repeated vexatious trials, I succeeded in roping her. Holding the lasso in one hand, and two other mules by their bridles, I led them toward camp, jumping over an intervening mudhole, expecting them to follow. But no such thing! and instead, astern flew their heads, and flat went I in the puddle. I then endeavored to drive them over, but they backed their ears preparatory to kicking the hindsights off the first man that struck them. With a running noose over Diabolique's nose, and a "heave-ho," I pulled lustily, but she held stiff her elongated neck and head, planted firmly her feet in front, and with strained eyeballs stood provokingly patient. How exquisitely malignant does one feel the "mounting devil in his heart," in such a position, and but for the want of her as a riding animal, a bullet would have been the reward of her stubbornness. Nor is this uncharitable feeling peculiar to myself; for there is yet the first amiable mule rider to be seen, as the best mule, at times, will become refractory, and to refrain from clubs and curses is a moral impossibility.

We stopped not the next day until four o'clock: when turning to the left, we encamped in a thick growth of underbrush. After helping unyoke, gath-

[1]*Carson's party*—On the way to Washington from California with official reports of what had been accomplished there by the American forces.

er wood, etc., I went in quest of turkeys, piping hard by in the bushes, but a storm drove me to camp after an unsuccessful half hour's dripping bushskulking.

The rain falling fast, we sheltered ourselves as we were able until sunset; when, the weather clearing, we shot at targets until darkness consigned us to the miseries of a soaking-wet night. By twelve o'clock the next day, William Bent's camp was discernable in a bottom on the east bank of the Purgatoire, which we reached with some difficulty, through the luxuriant growth of weeds, young timber, and across a deep ford. We pulled the saddles from the impatient mules, a few feet from the conical Indian lodge, in the back of which sat the host himself cross-legged on an outspread buffalo robe.

The spot selected for cultivation was in a handsome, level bottom, a mile in length, and from fifty to two hundred yards in width. The gentle curving of the shallow River of Souls, its banks fringed with the graceful willow and thorny plum, on which were affectionately entwined the curling tendrils of the grape and hop; the grouping of the slender locust and the outspreading umbrageous cottonwoods, with the clustering currents dotting the greensward, gave a sweet, cultivated aspect to the place; while the surrounding hills, within their sheltering embrace, seemed to protect the new enterprise. The *caballada*, half-hid in the luxuriant thickets, and the cows standing idly over the running waters in the quiet shade, with whisking tail, and others in the secluded vistas reposing in sheer plenitude, served much to increase the domestic countenance of the first farm on the Purgatoire.

William Bent's party consisted of himself, Long

Lade, and two others. They had plows, and the *acequia* (ditch), by which the land would be irrigated, was nearly finished; the dam, to elevate the water in this, was yet to be constructed; so the following morning we went hard to work. For two days we labored as though the embryo crop depended upon our finishing within a specified time. When the water flowed in the acequia, we watched the bits of wood and scum floating with the first tide, with intense interest and satisfaction.

In the course of my wanderings I met with men whose strongest argument against farming in New Mexico was that the soil required irrigation, which mode I upheld as a certain means of insuring a good crop. But the valleys are the only portions thus capable of cultivation, and they bear a small proportion to the many thousand leagues of land too rough and too sterile for agricultural purposes. Years hence, sheep and cattle grazing may be profitably engaged in on the upland; now there is no market for the beef, and the predatory character of the nomadic Indian tribes[1] deters men from certain tillage or herding.

Frank De Lisle, with his wagons, from the Cimarone, joined us, he having left Bransford and the herders two days after our departure. His men were soon helping us with hearty good will; their garrulity and fun gave new life to our exertions, and their ox teams did most worthy service in hauling logs and brushwood to the dam.

---

[1]*Bent and Hatcher's farm*—Of which I have just been speaking, was attacked by Indians, and the enterprising projectors forced to abandon their scheme, two months after I left the Rio Purgatorio. L. H. G.

CHAPTER XXI

The Arkansas

Frank started for Bent's Fort three days after his arrival and I accompanied him. The morning the teams stretched up the gently rising hill in commendable order from the valley of El Rio de las Animas, was one of the loveliest of balmy April. Our party was all animation and bustle; the shouts and songs of the ever-joyous teamsters were in consonance with the universal gaiety of Nature; the *enfans, diables,* and *sacre's,* had more than their usual music. Bands of bewildered antelope dashing in all directions afforded excitement, and rifles rung out sharply in no slow succession.

Our intention when starting was to make a near-cut across the prairie, to the "Hole in the Rock," instead of the circuitous route up the Purgatoire, to regain the Bent's Fort trace. This near-cut was destitute of water or shade, and by twelve o'clock the sun shone depressingly upon our heads, and the oxen worked slowly. Patches of verdure in hollows invited us from afar to search, though uselessly, for water, and the oft-seen optical delusion—*mirage*—showed that the glassy lakes on that prairie were a "vain and fleeting show." Though the spring was far advanced, the new grass was not in sufficient quantities for pasturage. A root—*pomme blanche,* or *tipsin*—(Psoralea esculenta, of the bontanists) of good flavor, was found in hard, dry ground during the day's travel, and we dug with our butcherknives enough to satisfy but illy our own appetites.

Journeying until sunset, we dismounted to light a pipe. When the sun disapeared behind the snow hills to the west of *Las Cumbres Españolas,* we rode on.

Night overtook us, still in the saddle; for yet two mortal hours we stumbled over the side-long hills amid the fragments of sandstone. Right glad were we to reach the "Hole in the Rock," and we rushed to the puddle of lukewarm water, burying our burning faces in it and striking back the impatient mules from intruding their dry, ugly mugs alongside of their masters. Both man and beast drank nigh unto bursting, as they well might, after fourteen hours' abstinence in a sweltering sun. Hobbling the mules in a grass spot and selecting a camp, we struck a blaze to direct the tired teamsters whose urgings to the jaded yokes rolled up to us from the valley in rear. Partaking of a hearty supper, I listened to their talking and singing—Edmond and Petout interpreting the burthen of their lays.

We found our mules at dawn *in status quo*, otherwise as hungry as when we left them the preceding night.

Sleeping, as we always did, without shelter overhead, the dayspring did not find us between the blankets; so, by the time the slanting sunbeams had ceased to peer under our hatbrims, we "rolled" along the elastic turf with "Bent's Fort, ho!" as the watchword, for it was part of the way home. Ah! what symphony is in the name of home—so gushing full of melodious thoughts—so touching and so peaceful!

The route was long and dreary—no water by the wayside—and at dusk brackish, diminutive Timpa gave small comfort to our parched throats. This section of country on the maps is written as "desert"; if the total want of wood, the scanty presence of brackish water, much burning, sand-reflected heat during the day, and chill winds at night, would justify the topographers in marking such as desert, the lands on either side the Taos Trail, from the Hole

in the Rock to the Arkansas, most certainly deserves the title.

While in motion the next morning, a party of men was descried coming. It proved to be Captain Jackson[1] and his company of mounted men en route for Santa Fé. Volunteer-like they were in the rear, at the side, and in advance of their commander; they disregarding military deference, he military control. For a mile and a half, others were strung along the trace in irregular squads, riding, sauntering carelessly, some without arms, and a few with muskets, beating the sage bushes for hares.

On passing the three baggage wagons, the first lieutenant—the same who helped the sheriff at the Taos execution—poked his head under the wagon sheet. He was in his shirt-sleeves, his hair uncombed, and altogether he was a rare specimen of that peculiar genus known as a Missouri volunteer officer. He shouted as I passed:

"How are ye—would ye like to hang any more Mexicans? Now wasn't that a tall time down to Touse!"

Judging from appearances, discipline had been drummed out of the service some time previously to our meeting with the company, for they seemed to have no knowledge of anything relative to their position except that they were entitled every day to three-fourths of a pound of messpork or "Ned," a pound of superfine flour, and as much coffee as could conveniently be stowed away 'neath their dingy blue jackets. Despite their seeming want of the attributes of soldiers, they astonish the braggadocio New Mexicans in battle or *fandago* amazingly.

It is an irresistible inference to draw from the premises our volunteer service affords, that Americans born were never intended to fight under the

[1]*Captain Jackson*—of the Missouri Battalion.

strict discipline of the regular service. Deference and subordination they learn neither as children nor as men—and an army of invasion is a poor school to remedy the defect in education.

We stopped for nooncamp on the trail, without water, as the grass was good and the oxen tired. A keg half-full from the salty Timpa served to make a decoction of coffee, and with unbolted Mexican flour and bacon grease, a thick mush was manufactured. We ate from the pan in which it was cooked; each one replenishing the point of his well-licked butcherknife from the one dish, until the greasy mass had vanished. We then stopped and looked at each other with that hungry, ill-satisfied stare, which had there been but human about, might, by the timid, have been mistaken for the glare of cannibalism.

After dinner, De Lisle, Ed——, and myself, pushed on for the river, leaving the wagons to follow as they could. It was oppressively warm (hot), and we wilted in the heat as weeds. Coming in sight of the low bluffs beyond the Arkansas, we met one of Captain Jackson's company, trudging on foot. He had stopped at Bent's Fort, while the company preceded him, and when we met him, he was *solus*, afoot in the broiling sun, and his mouth so dry that his articulation was quite indistinct. A canteen filled with molasses costing two dollars, he was willing to give for one drink of water, but we unfortunately had none, and the poor fellow trudged on again, carrying with him our pity at least.

In the Arkansas, we gulped again and again of the warm stream, returning to it a half dozen times. By dusk, we entered the heavy-browed fort gateway, glad in truth to rest in security. Captain Enos, Dr. Hempstead, Messrs. Drinker, Holt, and others, extended to me the hand of friendship; books were

plenty, and my rifle once more quietly occupied its corner. Buchanan, of winter-bathing memory, was to start to the States in a few days with a return train. He invited me to share his comforts. In the large corral outside the fort were a hundred wild and foolish mules starving into tractability.

Putting my "possibles" in a wagon, I received my account of coffee, sugar, etc., from the affable Doctor Hempstead. There was much bustle the day we started; the mules brayed impatiently through hunger, thirst, and confinement; the teamster shouted and whined, and cursed the foolish teams who appeared to have forgotten, during the winter's grazing on the wild hills, that there were such words in the ox, mule, and teamster vocabulary as "wo-ha" and "gee." By the time the train was fairly in motion, my little Bonita, decked with a blue blanket and firmly-strapped saddle, pranced before the gate in impatient glee.

I bade my friends good-bye with feelings of regret, but the idea of turning my face to the States much alleviated the pain of parting, and thus a shade of melancholy, mingled with recollections of home, produced an equilibrium sometimes upturned by the recurrence of a good story, jovial campfire, or image of a clever *compañero* to my memory, but again restored by thoughts equally fascinating, far more pure, of a tranquil home where could be relaxation from the responsibility of self-preservation, and cares, vexations, and burdening. When the somber bastions faded at last from view, I felt as can none but those alike circumstanced. There were a few men for whom I acknowledged an attachment. One of them was Hatcher. To manifest my regard for him, as was in my power, I left in a box securely nailed, some hundreds of water-proof percussion

caps, my backgammon board, and a few useful volumes to while away with profit a spare hour on his Purgatoire farm.

The rude American teamster in place of the polite Canadian, coarse jokes instead of *voyageur* yarns, and other changes for the worse, made me sadly experience the parting from mountain joys. The charm of my backwoods life was broken, though nearly seven hundred miles intervened between me and civilization; and notwithstanding the toil, hardship, and danger commingled with the loved scenes I was quitting, many a backward glance did I cast on the homeward trail.

We made camp in a bottom opposite the mouth of the Purgatoire. Captain Enos, Mr. Drinker, and others composed one mess, with Rosalie for cook. She was Ben Raymond's wife, a half-breed French and Indian—by-the-bye, a most diabolical compound—the woman he enticed from Ed, the inconsolable carpenter at Bent's Fort. Ours was a jolly mess, and composed of the best men in camp, viz: Buck, or Buchanan, Tom Sloan, Rhodes, Knowles, and Sam Caldwell. We progressed admirably—every man helping. We lived better than the other messes except the captain's; for at the Fort we purchased pepper, peppersauce, and other rarities. Tin plates—one degree of civilization above my past months' experience—were used at supper.

In the morning I made a detour of two hours' fast riding through a large bottom, while the wagons going across were hid by bluffs. I was alone, on the *qui vive* for game; when the road was regained, I saw by looking at the track that the party had not passed; selecting a good spot of grass, I undid the trailrope from the saddlepeak and let Bonita feed until the train came up.

Ours was a motley party, having for its composition Captain Enos, A. Q. M. U. S. A., commanding; the rest were wagonmasters, teamsters, and amateurs. George Frederick Ruxton,[1] the English traveler, with two men, here joined our party. Mr. R. was a quiet, good-looking man, with a handsome moustache. He conversed well, but sparingly, speaking little of himself. He had passed over the burning sands of Africa, penetrated the jungles of India, jogged on patient mule through the Tierra Caliente of Mexico, and lain down amid the snowdrifts of the Rocky Mountains. The same day Mr. Ruxton joined us, Davis, Brackenridge, Step, and a California Indian, members of Kit Carson's escort from California, added somewhat to our numerical, and incalculably to our fighting, strength; for they have stood the shock of more than one Indian skirmish, and have led the van at a sweeping gallop through many a dangerous mountainpass, with rifles cocked and unconfined hair streaming—the mountaineer's pennon. With Brackenridge and party were left the broken-down mules to recruit by rest and grass.

While in advance of the train with Mr. Ruxton and the Californians, a large, gaunt, white wolf, leaping from his lair in the long bottom weeds, scudded across the prairie for the distant hills. Davis and I raised the view halloo, and gave chase. Together with our yelling and spurring, it made quite an exciting run. I was first in, but as Davis ought to have, by right of seniority, the first shot, I yielded

---

[1]*Ruxton*, (1820-1848)—graduate of Sandhurst 1837; Lieutenant, H. M. 89th Regiment, traveller, explorer, author, decorated with the Cross of the Order of St. Fernando for valor in the civil wars in Spain. Ruxton Creek, on the eastern slope of Pike's Peak, bears his name.

the honor; he declined, and I, bringing up my rifle, crashed a ball through the wolf's head.

The following afternoon, we passed the spot where had been the Cheyenne village—the scene of so much novelty and interest to me the preceding winter.

Three of the muleteams made handsome runaways, streaking it over the level ground at a great rate, with the light wagons rattling at their heels; but the skillfulness of the drivers prevented any accident.

"Pretty Encampment," the loveliest on the river, with its glossy-leaved cottonwoods, was that evening early our home. Half a mile above was the Cheyenne village. Many of the savages who thronged the camp uttered the well-known *Hook-ah-hay, Numwhit* as they took my hand. A party coming in from a buffalo hunt—the veritable John Smith at their head—stopped; we had a cordial embrace. His lodge, pitched with the rest, his squaw, son, and other "sign," proclaimed him an Indian—almost. On returning to camp from a visit to the village, I found that Buck had traded my best blanket to a squaw for a robe worked with porcupine quills and beads.

When the train straightened out in the trail after sunrise, I was surprised to find Smith, his family, lodgedray, and *caballada* bringing up the rear. He was engaged the evening previous by Captain Enos to take charge of the fort now in progress of erection, on the Santa Fe trail, twenty miles below the Cimarron crossing, and for which the six-pounder mounted on light wagonwheels and drawn in front of the train, was intended to deal death to the presumptuous Comanche. A long frontier residence and knowledge of Indian character would seem to qualify Smith particularly for the station of commander of a fort in this country.

Buffalo were in sight and one was killed by Mr. Ruxton. A man, who had for some weeks been sick with the scurvy, died while the train was in motion —the hot sun and want of proper attention, hastened his death. Our mess was detailed to bury him, and on a knoll overlooking camp, we dug a grave, not quite three feet in depth, the sun broiling us the meanwhile. Taking hold of the blanket in which he died, we laid him on the ground, searched his clothing for papers and money, and rolling him up as we found him without ceremony deposited him in his last home on earth. The burial was mere form; for the wolves scratch up the bodies again, and often before we were out of sight the prairie ghouls were at their horrid work.

Another man died, and while the teams were being yoked up before starting the next morning, a grave was dug. A man, after hitching up his team, pulled off his coat to put it in his wagon; in there he found a man stiff in death. The poor fellow, alone and without a groan, had passed away. The corpse was quickly taken out, another hole, scarce deep enough to hide him, scraped, the earth rudely shoveled back, the cry "drive on" given by the captain, and the two men were left on the desolate, wind-swept prairie without even a simple board to mark the spot where lay their wasted, pain-released frames. Dolefully-howling wolves loping around camp waited impatiently for our departure to scatter with ravenous jaws the tattered blanketshrouds of the unfortunates.

Step and I were out for buffalo. We "crawled," on our knees, unsuccessfully for a band of cows which was coralling and returned to the train. Repairs being necessary, camp remained stationary the rest of the excessively warm day; Mr. Ruxton, Brack-

enridge and myself wanting "fat cow," started on foot for the numerous bands to the eastward, literally blackening the hazy river bottom. As we drew nigh, old bulls with tufted tails high in air in token of defiance, pawed the ground in impotent rage; discretion getting the better part of valor, they lumbered heavily before us, starting, to our vexation, other valorous knights of the "juicy hump," from quiet grazing and driving in the picketguards of frequent bands of fleetfooted cows. Three miles fast walking brought us to a favorable position for crawling; under cover of weeds we sent, simultaneously, our bullets into the unconscious band. Fatigued by walking in the hot sun, our aim was not steady, though two of the running herd halted often in their flight. We followed fast; again we fired, not altogether without effect, and, but for our impolitic presence, one would have stopped. He limped on slowly; we too tired to pursue.

We retraced our steps, and eyes aching with the intense heat, and pained by the sun's glimmering reflection from the saline efflorescence, whitening the cracked and parched ground. The mirage, reducing objects animate and inanimate to a state of uncertainty, afforded no relief. Mr. Ruxton told us of his sufferings on the African deserts and of the unhospitable character of the natives, but contrast with worse sufferings, brought us no succor. We longed to stop in some sylvan grove, and amid the murmur of tinkling waterfalls to be lulled to refreshing slumbers, but no such joys awaited us. All was reduced to hateful reality. We saw no relief but by slow and patient toiling. I bore up under the combined influence of the sun and thirst until sinking to the ground, scarcely able to move; but through the persuasion of my friends, I slowly walked to the river,

they very kindly stopping with me every little while where we buried our faces in the luke-warm water. That afternoon's tramp almost finished me.

Davis and I crossed the river for the favorite game when the train left camp. We crawled in the hot sand and stuck our knees and fingers with burrs, but no buffalo could be induced to stay and be shot at. We kept the same side until the wagons "nooned." Opposite, we were fortunate in finding the decaying fragments of an Indian bulwark. Loading ourselves with pieces of wood, we rode across; the teamsters, unyoking hastily, hurried over for the remaining fuel. The river was not knee-deep; in places the sand was washed out, leaving holes into which the hunger-impelled teamsters stumbled in reckless haste, getting themselves and burdens soaked, much to the amusement of the lookers on.

When anything relative to eating was concerned, the United States employees were active enough; when performing work—'t would make one's head ache to see their slow motions.

Many employees were afflicted with the scurvy—a disease brought on by great change from their usual diet, to superfine flour and fat mess pork. First the tendons under the knee contract, the leg mortifies; the patient lies and limps around camp, at the same time possessing a morbid, ravenous appetite for strong food; dysentery reduces him to mere skin and bone and he dies. His body, revolting to the sight, is rolled in blankets, and the unclean mass thrust hastily in a mere hole, only to be disinterred and gnawed by wolves. Dependent on themselves for medicine, they suffer much. Several poor fellows were far gone in the disease; an anodyne which I had, relieved them.

We became more circumspect in our wanderings,

and the wagons loitered not behind; for the dreaded Comanche and his savage competitor, the Pawnee, claim the region over which we were journeying as their own, to be preserved inviolate from the track-leaving, wood-wasting, and game-scaring whiteman. We passed the Cimarron crossing; and by noon of the 15th of May, we were at Mann's Fort[1] on the Arkansas.

[1]*Mann's Fort*—just 6 miles west of Dodge City, Kansas.

CHAPTER XXII

Service at Mann's Fort

The fort was simply four log houses, connected by angles of timber framework, in which were cut loopholes for the cannon and small arms. In diameter the fort was about sixty feet. The walls were twenty in height.

Outside, forty men were making adobes for chimneys. They supposed our advance party Indians, but discovering us to be "true men," they testified their delight by repeated glad cheers at the prospect of being relieved and returning home.

First, I should say who these men were and for what purpose they were here sent.

A station, equidistant from Fort Leavenworth and Santa Fe, was needed by the Government at which to repair the wagons and recruit animals, by rest, in safety. In accordance with this want, Captain Enos sent Mr. Mann, a wagonmaster, with forty teamsters and several yoke of oxen, to build in an eligible site below the crossing of the Cimarone, a log fort and blacksmith shop.

Six days before our arrival, a small party of Comanches shot and lanced a man fishing in the river not three hundred yards from the fort, in sight of the forty armed men; then, waving the reeking scalp aloft with yells of triumph and derision, they retreated to the plain unharmed.

Two days subsequent to the above, fifteen yoke of oxen and forty mules—these latter staked within seventy yards around the fort—were carried off by the Indians, who, driving a loose band of their own animals before them, with startling yells created a

stampede in which those of the fort joined, jerking up their picketpins in the furor.

But the whites were not altogether idle. Flying shots were exchanged; one savage fell, but was borne off between two fellow warriors at a fast gallop.

In consequence of the above forays, timidity became a second nature to the teamsters, and they ventured not to show their uncomfortable countenances outside the gate. All were determined to go to the "States," and Captain Enos found much difficulty in persuading enough to remain to guard the fort. "We don't care to stay here on fat pork and be scalped by the Injuns," was their usual reply to the captain. After two days' persuasion, he induced nine men to stop by offering ten dollars in addition to their present wages, making thirty dollars per month and rations. Smith was to receive sixty dollars and rations. As I had never been in an Indian fight and had never seen service and as Smith, my old friend, was to be in command, I concluded for excitement's sake to join them.

On presenting myself to Captain Enos, he raised his eyes in surprise, for my trip to the country was one of pleasure and to voluntarily enter into such dangerous service astonished him. Drinker, Davis, Brackenridge, and others, endeavored to dissuade me from my purpose, but thanking them for their solicitude, I refused to leave.

The next day Captain Enos left. Drinker shook hands with me at the fort entrance. He and I had traveled more than eight hundred miles in company —chilled through by the same blasts, wet by the same rains, and part of the time covered by the same blankets. Davis and Brackenridge were fine gentle-

manly fellows.[1] Their manners and conversation were most acceptable on the route down. Though Mr. Ruxton and I were not well acquainted, and although he partook somewhat of his national reserve, we parted as became fellow travelers. Mr. Ruxton published after his return a highly entertaining work entitled *Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains*—a book well deserving popularity.[2] When at Buffalo, N. Y. in August, 1848, I saw in the throng, awaiting admission to the dining-room, a moustache which struck me as familiar. After dinner, advancing to the wearer, I said—"How do you do, Mr. Ruxton?" He did not recognize me, my greasy buckskins, old wool hat, hickory shirt, and moccasins having been exchanged for more civilized habiliments; and, to aid his memory, I said,—"Don't you recollect the wolfchase near Tharpe's bottom; the little sorrel mule, Bonita, and its owner stopping at Mann's Fort?" He then immediately called me by name. Retiring to one side, we had a talk of the old scenes, his book, and other matters. Of the Blackwood series of *Life in the Far West*, then in course of publication, he acknowledged the authorship. He was on his way to the mountains—that afternoon he left, but the poor fellow died in St. Louis. He was a true gentleman and his loss is much to be deplored.

A guard mounted on one of the houses as soon as the train was in motion. As they receded in the distance, a slight feeling of fear and loneliness ran through me, decreased not a whit by the sight of our

---

[1]*Davis and Brackenridge*—with Fremont in his disastrous trip across a Rocky Mountain pass, in 1849, in which several men and all the animals perished with hunger and cold. L. H. G.

[2]*Ruxton's book*—since republished by Macmillan, under the title *In the Old West.*

own few members. The large gates—two ponderous wooden puncheon concerns, a foot in thickness—were to be swung on wooden hinges, which operation, together with relieving the guard, occupied us until night.

We were now alone; that is, ten well men and three sick ones; these last doomed to many a weary hour of unheeded pain not within our power to alleviate by healing medicine, or nourishing food. Our fighting force was as follows:

Captain, John Simpson Smith. Men: Thomas, Sloan,—Johnson,—Roy, Cain Strickler, Samuel Caldwell, L. H. Garrard, Ben Raymond, Andrew—, William Taylor. Also one six-pound cannon, forty rounds of grape and canister; forty cannon cartridges, six rifles, and seven muskets.

In addition, Smith had his squaw and two children; Raymond his half-breed Rosalie, who, with Smith's seven mules and horses, Raymond's one, my two, three old government scarecrows, and five broken-down United States steers, was the sum total of all the objects—animate and inanimate, offensive and inoffensive, with the exception of Rosalie's diminutive feist and an Indian cur, scarce half made-up—left to vegetate in the "Prairie Prison," aptly so called; for even a visit to the river for water, a hundred yards distant, required the bucket in one hand—the rifle in the other.

We felt this to be a small band to guard a fort in the Pawnee and Comanche range—both tribes noted for their dexterity and willingness to take the white-man's "hair," or his *caballada.*

Being possessed of writing materials, I was made clerk to keep account of rations issued, and chronicler of events such as passing trains. In addition, the office of orderly sergeant devolved upon me, the

duties of which consisted in arranging the night sentries. There were ten men including Smith, and calling from twilight to dawn ten hours, we made five watches of two hours' duration each—two men on duty at once; the first, standing until the evening star sank beneath the horizon, which, though more than the allotted period, made not much difference as it was in the fore part of the night. When the first watch "guessed" his time had expired, he awoke the next on duty who repeated the process, and so on through. Smith and I were on first watch; and to avoid contention or dissatisfaction, the first guard was second the next night, third the next, and so on through—those behind filling up the vacancy.

Two were appointed as day sentries—a permanent office, they doing nothing else. At his own request, seconded by our wishes, Strickler was promoted to the office of cook; and he so exerted his culinary skill as to make the monotonous rations quite palatable. Smith's squaw cooked for him; Rosalie for Raymond and Taylor.

On the 18th day of May, we built of adobes, on the Northwest house and its corresponding diagonal, a breastwork for a defense against the wind as well as arrows. The waterproof roofs were flat, being made of small poles laid parallel, with six inches of mud piled on, and an inclination of one and a half inches to the yard. Standing guard was anything but pleasant, and at night exceedingly dreary. Smith would mount post on the roof for a while, and I, down below, would creep from port to port, now listening for the foe—now seated on the cannon, holding my breath at the least sigh of the winds. In pacing my lonely walk, I was filled with gloomy forebodings. The wind whistled a mournful tune—the

damp, fitful gusts nearly overturned me in their suddenness. Scarce fifteen yards distant, brutal wolves fought over the grave of the murdered man. A large white one, whose faint outline I could see below me, gave a most unearthly howl, which going out in the stillness, sent back its lonely echo from the distant hills, and which met a response from others afar, who with fiend-like screams, congregated under the walls growling and bristling in fearful wrath, or continuously loped around the fort in hungry expectation. When relieved from watch, I nestled in my warm blankets, and after sending, mentally, the Pawnee and accursed wolves *a los diablos*, I dropped into a state of blessed forgetfulness, to be waked at sunrise with the cry of "Turn out!"

Rain and wind were our uninterrupted visitations for two days. The animals had to be picketed close —the sentry meanwhile keeping vigilant lookout. At night we brought them inside the fort.

On the 20th of May, Callahan, a trader, passed to the States. He was from Chihuahua and short of provision. Smith, empowered to hire men for the "fort service," induced one young man to stay who was journeying with the train without leave, license, or provender. Sloan, in his fondness for nicknames, called him Rasarhus Cowhorn, a cognomen which clung so tenaciously to the younger gentleman, that we never knew his right one.

Sam Caldwell and I were now on the same guard. Smith reposed undisturbed through the night. One of the guard fell asleep on his post, for which he received a reprimand, interlarded with expressive terms from Smith, and a no-gentle hint from all, that a repetition of the offense would mean the cannon with the accompanying jerking!

In the afternoon succeeding the above transaction, Roy, a heedless fellow, on one of Smith's animals with two in lead, and I on Bonita, with Diabolique in tow at the end of a rawhide lariat, crossed the river for grass. We were barebacked, our guns in hand, and the slippery mules rendered the possession of our seats uncertain. A gun fired from the fort was to be the signal of danger. We were a mile off, lying down talking, the mules quietly grazing, when the full heavy sound of the gun was heard. Snatching my blanket with one hand, and with Diabolique's leadrope and my gun in the other I started after Roy. The animals, as if interpreting our wishes, went in a full run from the start. With rifles ready to fire, we came within a hundred yards of the river, where Diabolique broke from me, galloping up the river bank, head and tail high, neighing and frantic. "There goes eighty dollars," thought I, but there was no time for calculation when probably the whole tribe of yellowskins was at our heels. Off flew my hat to the breeze; now we plunged into the water, jamming against each other; when halfway across, Diabolique, with streaming tail, wide-spread nostrils, and wild eye, charged in among us.

Our excited friends met us at the entrance; the sentry shouted to hurry. We barred the gate, drew tightly our belts and fixed our guncaps anew, when the party bearing down on us proved to be a band of wild horses scudding northward some two miles to the east. After a talk and recovery from the fluttering effects of the false alarm, Johnson and I waded the river, where we picked up my hat and baited a wolftrap.

With the forewheels of the cannon wagon, we carried adobes and stiff mud for mortar, to build chimneys to the blacksmith shop and the messroom.

Luckily, Captain Mann's party had made enough adobes to last some time; for small fun was it to mould brick. On the evening of the 23d, a train of wagons corralled at the *Caches*,[1] much to our disappointment, as we wished to meet with them. The next morning they stopped in the road opposite the fort, and the men came to see us.

It was Bent & St. Vrain's company. William Tharpe, an Indian trader, had joined them with his wagons for safety. Mr. Holt, the fort storekeeper, Ed, the Frenchman, whose squaw was enticed away by Raymond, and Frank de Lisle, the wagonmaster, were all in the train on the way home. Charlotte, the cook (who, with her husband, was set free by the company for the valor evinced by the latter, Dick, at the Pueblo de Taos), also grinningly showed her ivory, as I extended my hand. After greeting warmly Edmond Paul and Petout, my two Canadian friends, I gave them the thirty days' rations of flour and coffee I had purchased at Bent's Fort, for which they kindly thanked me. Traders do not provision themselves well, and these clever fellows were feasting on "poor bull."

Smith, who had been showing, in private conversation with me, a fear of losing his hair, gave notice of leaving with the train which stopped while he collected his possibles. While on guard together, he often told me the utter folly, the downright madness, of staying in the fort at the mercy of the Indians, and that his pay would be nothing in comparison to the loss of his animals and the risk of life. To the men his reasons were plausible enough: his animals picketed around the fort were starving, and he would go with the train and let them feed on good grass every night, until he would meet a train

[1] *The Caches*—well known camp near Dodge City, Kansas.

to return to us. Knowing this to be his intention, I sent Bonita and Diabolique along with the band, for the risk in keeping them was greater, in fact, than letting them go. It was a trial to part with Bonita; indeed I felt nearer to him than to any of my friends. When I tied the lariat about his neck, and gave him a good-bye pat with my hand, he broke away kicking and shaking his long ears joyously, and with head to the ground, joined, neighing in delight, the *caballada.*

It was difficult to withstand the solicitations of my friends to leave, but my promise to stay had to be complied with, however earnestly I wished to be with them. Our "brave" commander, squaw, and Jack, were pleased with the change. Little Jack had contributed much to my happiness; for, although he could not talk American, the sight to me was as an oasis in the desert. Among rough men, and no kind words, Jack, at least, was not void of childish affection, and to amuse and talk to him recalled home and cheerful retrospections.

CHAPTER XXIII

A Welcome Arrival

The loss of Smith we all felt, for he was of an agreeable temperament. Sloan was now in command, though from Roy's turbulent disposition we anticipated difficulty. I retained my position, and Sloan was pleased to be lenient in his requisitions on my time for labor, thus giving me opportunity for enlarging the small journal noted elsewhere. He wished me, however, not to incur the illwill of the rest by abusing the privilege.

The morning following the departure of Smith, we carried charcoal from the pit to the intended "shop." With coffeesacks on our shoulders, we lifted until our appearance would have well vied with that of a city *charbonnier*. Dirty work it was to be sure, but necessity overcame any scruples on the subject, and we began to think our thirty dollars and rations rather a poor compensation for so small a sprinkling of adventure, and so much hard work.

The morning of the 26th, there being a cessation of hostilities on the mudbrick and coalpit, I improved the time by lying full length on a plank in a cool corner of the messroom, my rifle within reach (for our guns and selves were one and inseparable), when the cry of "Indians! Indians!" from Taylor, the sentry, set me miraculously quick on my feet. I rushed into the sleeping apartment and back again, before finding my gun, so bewildered was I by the startling announcement. Seizing it, I helped the men run the cannon to the gate. Near were some eight or ten mounted Indians, striving to take our little band of animals. Andrew, with lumbering musket, blazed

harmlessly away. A party dashed furiously up from the plain, and others rode back and forth with glistening lance and spotless shield while in the narrow strip of wood fringing the river some hundred yards distant, the dusky forms of the foe could be seen gliding hastily toward us. Caldwell, understanding more of gunnery than the rest, pointed the piece at the nearest squad, Sloan adjusted the burning match, and I primed the touchhole.

There was a scene. Sam Caldwell, a six foot, three-inch man encased in a flaming red-flannel shirt, and in a stooping position, moved the piece carefully, sighting with his fine eye and waiting for the command from Sloan—a little to one side, Sloan himself, with fiery beard and moustache of no small pretensions, intently watching the maneuvers of the savages—then Bill Taylor with his mouth thoughtlessly open, leaning against the portal, a long government blunderbuss at rest in the bend of his arm, and nearer the gateway, in attitudes of indecision, stood Rasamus Cowhorn, Cain, and Andrew, not more interesting than usual, except their perturbed countenances were robbed of the bloom of health at other times apparent. Close to Sam was myself, feeling first rate, as I thought at the time—but perhaps an egotistical description had better be omitted. Imagine this in a flat bottom, wearing away undulatingly to the low hills in the background, along whose base in the glimmering distance, irregular bands of horsemen fast clattered toward us; on the other hand, the placid Arkansas, winding its tortuous course between lonely and barren banks, with straggling cottonwoods to mark the course; then a small log fort, discernible at no great distance through its insignificance, at the gate of which scarce ten men grouped around a sixpounder, waited in stern

silence for greater demonstration of war from the foe ere the commencement of bloodshed.

The Indians were close to our horses, three hundred yards from us, and attempting to drive them away. They then charged toward us, and we fell back from the cannon while the match descended; they seeing the piece, beat a hasty retreat. One presumptuous warrior on a fine black horse, dashed at Sloan's picketed mule in desperation; he left again with several balls whistling about his ears. We could have easily killed several of the foe, but warfare once commenced, we might have fared badly in the end; so we were amicably disposed. One old fellow, seeing that we had decidedly the advantage, dismounted, and coming within two hundred yards, took the robe from his shoulders, sat down, rose and shook the buffalo again to show that he was unarmed, and with other signs, meant, as I judge, peace.

Roy, placing confidence in my knowledge of Indian signs, met the warrior under range of the cannon, telling us, if the Indian jumped on him, to blaze away and kill both! They shook hands, but could effect nothing, so Roy called for me; with the aid of signs and the Cheyenne tongue, they proved to be Arapahoes. Two others came up, and then two of our men. I told them their warriors must go away; the first man arose, and by some fancy manipulations, dispersed them. The spokesman then commenced an excuse for their presence by professing great friendship for the whites; saying that his object in calling was to inform us—that "the Comanches were in great numbers at a small stream, a day's ride to the east, and were to make a descent upon us" (that we doubted not), "and that had it not been for the Arapahoe chiefs, our fort would have been taken."

This, with a lot of other stuff he told, which wound up with a request for tobacco. We set before them coffee and bread, and my long pipe, Roy and I smoking with them on the prairie, peace and goodwill—our men the while keeping vigilant watch from the fort, to prevent surprise. As we wished them not to spy out the nakedness of the land, the guests were not allowed to approach nearer than fifty yards of the fort. In a short while they left. Though the Indians came undoubtedly with hostile intention, so soon as they found our power superior to theirs, they, having confidence in us (or any other white men), sent a messenger to confer with us. Reverse the matter, wagh! the white scalp would be off in a hurry.

The next day a buffalo, breasting the breeze, hove in sight on the hill back—a good sign of the presence of Indians, as they never travel adverse to the wind in summer,[1] or come to the river but for water, of which there was an abundance everywhere on the prairie, by reason of the recent rains—and Roy, with his usual heedlessness, started in pursuit, killing it. He came to the fort, saddled a horse to get the meat, but had scarcely reached it, when we who had been watching, saw him urging his horse in a full run on the back track, with three yelling Comanches at his heels. We greeted him with a shout of glee as he cut around to the gate.

Supper was at sundown, after which we generally congregated in the sentry's house to smoke and talk, with guns in repose on the arm, to make shots at the skulking coyotes who not unfrequently took ugly balls with them in the ignominious flight. The sun

[1]In winter the buffalo travel against the wind, owing to the fact that their longest hair is on the front portions of their bodies.

in setting, cast flickering beams far up on the meandering, broadsheeted Arkansas, and shone on the numerous verdure-teeming islands. The slow winging of a forsaken-looking crane, or the more merry flight of smaller birds up the stream, darting into the glittering spot, to disappear as if by magic, often excited our attentive admiration. But it was our favorite pastime after a day's work, with plenty within and a pipe without, to stretch out on the flat roof and listen to the yarns spun by the different fellows.

Sam Caldwell had been on shipboard much of his life, and amused us in his style and broadly-pronounced "a's." Sloan was a blacksmith, with stories of a prosy, every-day nature. He joined a company of horse-soldiers for the war and Santa Fe, but it was rejected by reason of the requisition being filled before the tender of its services, and so he started out as extra teamster "to see the country anyhow." He received, at Mann's Fort, sixty dollars per month and rations.

Cain Strickler was a schoolmaster, nineteen years of age (he and I the youngest), and somewhat green; his teaching was a good exemplification of "the blind leading the blind." He was from Virginia (of the first families, of course), and, being on a tour to Missouri at the commencement of the Mexican war excitement, was seized with a desire to see the oft-vaunted "elephant," so he started out as teamster. He was, however, apt, and though he never learned cards before this trip, the way he went ahead of the fellows playing poker, put him at once in that class called "hopeful."

Roy was rather mysterious, and from circumstantial evidence, we found that he had been in a penitentiary. He was heedless of danger, and hard-

ened in feelings; to his former State's imprisonment we attributed his recklessness. When his acquaintance of Captain Eno's company bade him good-bye, they said:

"Roy, we never expect to see you again, you are so foolhardy—the Indians will have your hair yet." This proved but too true.

Andrew, whose last name I have forgotten, was from the Platte purchase, in Missouri. He was principal witness in a murder case; and, being of a malleable temperament, was bribed with a horse and considerable money to perjure himself, and then to leave the country. We ascertained a few leading facts; and by Sloan's skillful queries, we learned the whole state of the case. He swore not to return to Missouri.

Rasamus Cowhorn was another genius. He left the States a year before, as teamster to a trader's train—went to Chihuahua—was at the battle of Sacramento and told great tales of bombshells, cannon balls, valorous Mexicans, and smoke, and was now on his way home *sans* the needful. He remained at our fort some days on trial, helping us eat our rations. The wolf-like appetite manifested for a week was alarming; when his gastronomic demands slackened in a degree, Smith hired him.

On the 28th of May, we noticed an approaching body of men, and finding them Indians, we stopped work, shut the gates, and lounged with guns freshly capped.

Two riding up to the Wall, I saluted them in the Cheyenne tongue.[1] They were Arapahoes, and wished to come in, but that was against orders. I asked for Warratoria (the most peaceable and re-

[1]The Arapaho language was so difficult to learn, that no white man ever mastered it.

nowned of their chiefs) and was told he soon would arrive. They then wanted *ve'heo mah'-pe* (whisky). Being negatively answered, they, much dissatisfied, rode off. The sight of the lodgedrays, squaws, children, and dogs recalled many thoughts most gratifying. The Indian encampment was three hundred yards above us on the river bank.

When Warratoria came, he was admitted, though Sloan much distrusted him, I had made his acquaintance in the Cheyenne village, and knew his friendly disposition toward the whites, and the good effect it would have to treat him with confidence. Shaking hands as old friends, and inviting him into the messroom, we set before him coffee, bread, and the long pipe. The chief wished "Beardy's" presence, which after a while was granted. He is so called from a tuft of hair growing on the point of his chin which gave him an odd appearance. His features were coarse, inclining to sensuality. Warratoria's face, on the contrary, wore a benign expression, and the slight furrows of age were so tempered as to give his countenance a cast of deep thought; his expansive brow, slightly receding, was worthy of a statesman. I was filled with reverence for the old man, though he was but an ignorant savage. He spoke in short sentences only (so different from the volubility of most savages, though many persons give them the character for taciturnity), as if conscious of the lasting impression he was making on me.

In an hour the pyramidal lodges dotted the ground at irregular distances; before the larger ones the stainless shield and medicinebag with blue-enrolled pipestems were supported on the three whitened wands. Where, a short while before, lay a bare spot of turf, was now the site of eighty lodges, nearly three hundred human beings, and eleven hundred

horses capering, rolling, and cropping the sweet bottom grass. The girls, from twelve years up to womanhood, waded the river for fuel; some crossing, a few returning laden with sticks, other carrying water, and all laughing, talking, and splashing. Boys played their favorite game of arrows, or astride of ponies, ran races over the smooth prairie. This commingled scene of comfort, youth, and hilarity, brought back, with yearnings for a repetition, last winter's experience.

Sam Caldwell and I visited them without other weapon than butcher knives, for we felt little danger while the cannon ranged the village, and the two principal chiefs were in the fort. A guard was at the gate to admit or show out the few savages having the freedom of the place, but we were impolitic in discovering our weak force to them. A queer-looking case begged of Sam and me powder and ball, with a load or two of which we satisfied him. He had an old English carbine with "George" and a crown on the barrel—the property, most likely, of a *pelado,* whose scalp was now the decoration of some *coup*-loving Arapaho.

We noticed great commotion on reaching the fort again. The villagers hurried in the direction whence they that morning came—soon returning triumphantly with a young man who had been taken prisoner by a trading party in a skirmish two days before. We now found out that the braves of this village were leagued with the Comanches in attacking trains. To the surprise and great joy of the Indians, the prisoner was set at liberty —a different fate from that a captive experiences at their hands. The traders had given the young man a new blanket and ornaments; but, as the Indians had outraged the expected wag-

ons, they struck their lodges, pitching them a half mile from the fort.

A train from Santa Fe, in command of Captain Fowler, arrived during the day, corralling a few steps from the gate. A Mexican *ranchero* was in company —like his brothers, with national peculiarity in features and expression.

Sloan employed a young man, John Nagle by name, for the "fort service." His mule he sold to a teamster for forty dollars. We shut the gate at the usual hour; mounted guard as if alone, being more apprehensive of the light-fingered teamsters, after a winter's sojourn in Santa Fe, than of the Indians.

We hauled wood while there was a large numerical force by the fort, not daring to venture while alone. We fastened the gates, and leaving two on guard, crossed the river astride the coupling pole of a wagon, holding on with one hand and clenching our rifles in the other. Sloan sat on the fore standard, examining the edge of an ax; Bill Taylor, with bawling voice and an oxwhip, kept up "steam." Johnson, who was an adept in the wood line, during the rest intervals told of his questionable feats in cording steamboat wood on the Missouri River. Cain Strickler and I did our best at loading. We threw the wood from the wagon into the fort yard, not caring to give the teamsters a chance to supply their fires at our expense.

The Indians, striving to trade with the wagoners, became quite troublesome; the latter would endeavor to drive the Arapahoes away by cries of *"Bamouse, bamouse,"* calling over the Spanish-Mexican term, *vamos* which they used for "Leave, get out, go," and a half dozen similar exclamations. These same fellows had enjoyed the privilege in New Mexico of keeping the "great unwashed" at a respectful dis-

tance from the provision trains; they thought the same ejecting appellation would serve for the Arapaho.

Among the Indian boys, splashing and riding across the river on the empty woodwagon, was one of thirteen years, whose features wore such a mild and manly air and whose eyes were turned on me so intelligently, I took him to my baggage, put on him a clean, bright-blue shirt, and then tied a colored handkerchief around his neck. His hair was neatly combed and the deerskin moccasins fitted nicely. When I sent him away with some brown sugar, he looked the happiest boy in the country.

The traders with whom these Indians had been fighting, arrived about three o'clock. Not a savage was visible. For three consecutive days they had fought these Indians, who, charging, ham-strung the oxen and annoyed them much. This outrageous conduct was the principal theme of conversation which the sight of the distant lodges increased to such a degree, that one well-proportioned six-footer proposed, with the cannon, to "rake the village." Now, we were opposed to this decisive measure for two good reasons. First, was the indiscriminate slaughter of women and children that would have ensued. The second was, that on our own heads and weak fort, would have fallen the speedy vengeance of the tribe. Not choosing to remain the scapegoats of their iniquities, we at once refused the use of our gun—and told them they should take it by force alone.

Nagle, the recruit, and others, came in from the hunt, their animals loaded with buffalo. The men were out of available funds, and to accommodate them, as well as ourselves, Sloan and I bought a box of chewing tobacco from the traders. I was to open

an account with each man and supply them and receive in return drafts on the quartermaster.

Cowhorn borrowed fifty cents, bought tobacco and traded it for moccasins, which, sold to the teamsters, gave him three dollars' gain. Sloan purchased six gallons of whisky, and out of the "mess fund," our untiring cook, Cain, laid in a store of saleratus and peppersauce, thereby contributing much to the relish for government rations.

The next morning the traders left for Santa Fe', and the United States train, homeward bound, rolled on, with many an agonizing shriek from the rickety, sun-cracked wagon-wheels. I drew up a paper for Sloan to sign, showing what had become of the man received into service, so that the captain of the train on arriving at Fort Leavenworth, could satisfactorily account for the nonappearant. With the train, our invalids left. Poor fellows! they no doubt had a wretched time jolting over the road in springless wagons, and little probability was there of their ever reaching the States. We shut the gates and cautioned anew the guard. How different the scene within two short hours! Of a busy crowd of one hundred and twenty men and sixty wagons, none save our little force remained.

Toward noon the next day, the sentry shouted: "Train in sight!" Soon a wagon and horsemen appeared. Turning from the trail, they passed the fort in a long trot and encamped three hundred yards distant. I was glad to see Messrs. St. Vrain, Folger, and Chadwick—old friends; also, E. P. Blair, Jr., Estis (the Taos tavernkeeper), and Fitzgerald, the dragoon Tibeau, the Canadian driver, and Blas, the Mexican herder, were along, too. A goodly company, indeed! They had twenty-five horses and mules in prime order. That morning, thinking the Arapaho

village to be Comanche lodges, they moved to an island in the Arkansas and threw up a temporary fortification. They stopped two hours and then concluded to run the risk.

Mr. St. Vrain urged me to go with him, offering me a horse to ride, He said it was foolish to stay with so weak a force, and that I would assuredly lose my scalp. I became scared when such mountain men feared danger, but feeling bound to Captain Enos, we parted, and sorry enough was I.

One night Sam and I were on guard. The rain poured in torrents, the air was damp and chilly; and, as we knew bowstrings and flintlocks would not avail the foe much in an encounter, we merely leaned in the doorway and listened by turns; and, at intervals, floundered in the mud from porthole to gate. Some spoiled buffalo meat, thrown over the wall, attracted the wolves. I watched, not five feet distant, through a port where, in the dim light, the coarse gray hairs of their backs could be seen bristling with rage. At daylight one large fellow remained, slowly retreating and returning. I put the government musket through a loophole (not caring to use my rifle in the rain), and aiming at the animal twenty-five steps distant, fired, killing him immediately. When the gates were opened, Sloan and I, dragging him in, took off the hide and stretched it with pegs to dry.

We again worked; this time making our own brick. Some dug earth; others, with the forewheels (tongue and hounds attached) of the cannonwagon and a half barrel, brought water from the river, playing "hossey," as our fat commander facetiously observed. We had two yoke of oxen to tramp the mud, and I, being the least strong of the company, with a

long stick punched up "Ball and Bright," when their movements grew tardy.

The 7th of June, according to our reckoning, was Sunday—no work in consequence. The "Three Guardsmen" and my pocket Testament amused us (can't vouchsafe a great amount of edification) for a while, and in the evening, we shot at a target across the fortyard.

The painful necessity of making brick was forced upon us at last, with all its muddy unpleasantness. The molds were sixteen inches long, by eight in width, and four in depth—the facsimile of brick molds on a larger scale. These were filled with stiff mud and turned out on the smooth ground—the molds brought back, dipped in a barrel of water to free them of earthy particles, filled again, and so on *ad infinitum.* Johnson and I, the carriers, had two molds each; the wet adobes grew heavier as the work progressed. Three hundred and twenty-six were the result of the day's labor.

Mr. Coolidge, with four wagons and five men from the Arkansas Pueblo and the Platte, arrived during the day. He concluded to remain here for a further re-inforcement, ere proceeding through the suspicious Coon Creek.

We made two hundred and ten adobes on the 12th, and then employed ourselves in digging a ditch beyond the fort walls to carry off the accumulated rainwater which might engender sickness the coming summer.

Roy, Nagle, Rasamus, and one of Coolidge's men went for buffalo. Being absent the entire day, we felt much anxiety for their safety. It was late at night. We gave up all hope of seeing them, and were moodily cogitating what to do in regard to fortifying ourselves more securely, when a rifle report

and a shout not to fire were heard. Rushing up the ladder, the men whom we had seen scalped in our imagination, answered to their names.

"What's the matter? What kept you so long?" asked we, impatient to know.

"Oh! had to go a long ways for meat, then a chase of five miles, hottest kind—were way out on Coon Creeks."

"See any Indians?"

"Yes! darn 'em, sixteen. They gave chase for a mile; but, after a few shots, one was wounded by Roy, and they hauled off. Rasamus was pretty bad scared—thought his hair was gone; he began to talk about Franklin."[1]

Sam and I were waked up at midnight to stand post—the rain pouring. We did not leave the mess-room. Thinking the foe would not attack in such weather, we sipped at the hot, lye-like coffee, and smoked until off duty.

No work on the 14th by reason of the incessant rain. We had two packs of cards, and as the specie circulation was limited, rations of beans served as legal tenders; the way they changed hands was a caution to hungry men.

In the Indian attack on the trading party, a colt was captured by the latter, which was given to Sloan. In commemoration of the event, he named it Comanche. One night, hearing a strange moaning, we collected to inquire. Seizing our rifles, we found poor Comanche outstretched with a half dozen wolves at work on him. We drove the brutes away, and carrying the victim into the fort, saw that he was too badly eaten to live; he was shot with a pistol. In the morning a few well-picked bones and strips of sinew were all that remained.

---

[1] *Franklin, Mo.*—his home town.

No work on June 15th, by reason of the sullen rains. This was my eighteenth birthday. Quite a different one from last—then at home, and nothing particular to do, but to cast enervated glances at dull books—here, in government service, and surrounded by the most hostile Indians on the continent, my scalp in danger of sudden hoisting on some yelling Comanche's lancepoint—my body drenched by the frequent night rains. Well! there is something refreshing in variety, and the comforts of civilization will be better appreciated when regained.

The afternoon was sunshiny and warm; the swollen Arkansas received our nude bodies in its swift current after a half mile's run up the bank, while the sentry on the fort and another on the river's edge, looked sharp for the foe.

In the middle of the day a train hove in sight and camped near the "Caches." Roy started for it, though he might have been killed before going half way. He soon returned, with several men. To my surprise Charley M'Carty, with whom I parted in the spring on the Poinel in New Mexico shouted: "Why, old fellow, you here! What have you been doing since I left you? St. Vrain told me you was in Taos, on guard, when the old *palous* were hung, and that you cut a 'big swath' generally."

"In government service," rejoined I. "I wanted to see an Indian fight, though my curiosity is not yet gratified. We have come quite near it, however."

"If they'd see you in the settlements, with those buckskins and old wool hat, you'd pass for one of the mountain boys—be a da-arned if you wouldn't! Do they feed you on 'Old Ned,' as Hatcher called the pork?"

"Where are you going, and what's your party—government or traders?" asked I.

"I'm bound for old Fayette County, Kentucky, where white people live—where you can get corn-bread and sleep sound at night without having screeching yellow devils skulking around ye; and, old feller, there's a girl that wants to see me, and I'd give my mule to see her—be da-arned if I wouldn't—you know I told you about her last winter; she's the greatest—"

"Never mind now, Charley—we'll talk of your girl after a while. Nobody here cares for her but yourself. I want to know who is in the train yonder—maybe I have friends—a scarce genus in this region."

"That's a great old way to bluff a fellow off, when he's half froze to see his girl, but if you want to know, Colonel Russell from California, Secretary of State, under Fremont, is in that crowd, with sixteen of the greatest 'boys' you ever came across. They are of the California Battalion. The Colonel is bearer of dispatches to Washington, from Stockton—"

"Who are the rest? There are at least thirty wagons."

"A train of 'Neds,' under command of Captain Bell, of the wagonmasters' department. Any danger of Pawnees here?"

"Yes, there are a few about, but walk in."

The fort soon filled with the hard-looking teamsters, and before long Colonel Russell himself appeared, dressed in California buckskin pantaloons open from the knee downward, a light summer coat, white wool hat, and yellow California *zapotes*. Charley introduced me. On hearing my name, he asked that of my father. He then grasped my hand warmly, saying they were classmates in college.

We went to the provision room, and sitting on some floursacks, talked of friends far away.

"What brought you out here, my boy? Your mother, of course, gave you leave, and how long have you been in the country?"

Seeing the drift of that and other questions of like import, I replied: "Do not think, Colonel, I came here in an improper manner, for I have letters with me to show to the contrary—this is a trip for fun and health, though I must say it's rather rough fun."

"I am indeed pleased to hear it, for, at first I feared that you had committed some misdemeanor as many youths do, and run away in consequence, but, my dear boy," said he, laying his hand affectionately on my shoulder, "you are in a most dangerous place; I wonder you have not been killed before this. I never heard of such a thing before. Ten men in a fort in the Comanche range, and you are hardly a man yet, you know!"

"Oh! 'Our hearts are big,' and we are all center shots."

"You must go along with me. Only ten men in the fort; it is sheer madness to be here," soliloquized he.

"I have promised Captain Enos to stay until relieved by troops from the States."

"Ah, but we must waive all such rash promises! Had I a son here, no greater kindness could be done me by a friend than to take him away—you must go—you must go."

"Smith has my mules."

"You can take the best one in my *caballada*. Were you to be killed here, I would never cease to blame myself."

Through the Colonel's solicitation, Sloan gave me a discharge, entitling me to pay on reaching Fort Leavenworth, and showing that I left with his con-

sent. I made a hasty settlement with him of the fort accounts, tobacco, etc., put my small kit in the colonel's wagon, my saddle on one of his best mules, shook hands with my tried friends, and with light heart bade farewell to the "Prairie Prison." Cain Strickler, Sam Caldwell, and others, coming in with a load of wood, met me a short distance out. Sam shouted: "What's up now, that you are going to leave—not showing the white feather—if you are, may the cursed Comanches get your scalp!"

"Hold on, old fellow, take breath and I'll tell you; Colonel Russell, here, is an old friend of the family; and when he found me out, he would not let me stay. Well, good-bye; Sloan will tell you more; the train's gone on and for the sake of my hair I must keep with them."

"Give us your hand, my hearty," and a warm grasp was our parting salutation.

The party with which I was now associated numbered eighty-four or eighty-five men, sixteen of whom composed Colonel Russell's guard in command of Lieutenant Brown. The Colonel and his party, for thirty-five days of their route in to Santa Fe, were compelled to live on the meat of their broken-down mules. I at once made Brown's acquaintance. He was attired in Apache-Indian costume—a graceful dress. Two years before this, he went from Missouri frontier with a company of emigrants to California—thence to the Sandwich Islands. He returned to find affairs in a turbulent state and received an appointment as second lieutenant in the California Battalion. Soon after, he was detached in command of this escort. He was, at the time of our meeting, not twenty years of age.

We went about three miles to camp. The colonel's tent was pitched. He and I became its inmates,

where we talked until his sable cook announced supper. Camp presented a lively scene. Charley McCarty, holding in his hand the wolfskin I had given him, was telling a group of teamsters, full of supper, stretched at length on the grass, how the musket had skinned my nose when the wolf was killed. Some of the men were cooking, others coralling the mules and oxen, and all, with joke and laugh, making themselves merry.

My own spirits, not less from the contagion of this gayety, than from the great change that had just taken place in my circumstances, felt a corresponding elevation. I cannot be too grateful to Colonel Russell for his genuine kindness to me. He is an honor to his native state, Kentucky, and a valuable acquisition to that of his adoption—California.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Brush With Comanches

We started early. The wagons traveled in double file, so that in case of an attack from the leagued Comanches and Arapahoes, whose propinquity was as well known as dreaded, they would not be strung along too great a space. The *caballada* was driven and kept between these two lines of the train.

Late in the afternoon, when the sun was fast sinking to its golden-hued, silver-flecked bed, and the drooping ears of the flagging mules betokened weariness, objects were seen directly before us in the trace. Keen-eyed Barton, in calling our attention to them, uttered his opinion in the single significant word, "Injuns!"

"Indians, say you, Barton?" inquired the Colonel, looking in the direction pointed. "Indians? Upon my word I believe so. Come on, we'll reconnoiter, and say nothing to the train until the fact is ascertained —indeed, I hope not"—and, striking spurs into his large brown California mule, he loped forward, followed by some eight or ten of us. We soon ascertained, beyond a doubt, enough danger to lessen our party to five—the Colonel, Barton, Brown, McCarty, and myself, who kept on until within less than a quarter of a mile of the large party of mounted warriors. That portion of our men who had put back with all possible speed, set the train in a ferment by their prodigious narrations.

In front, on the opposite rise of ground, was a sight to make the stoutest heart among us quail; for the Indian force, displayed within long rifleshot, numbered, according to our unanimous estimate, four hundred strong, glittering with gay pennons,

bright lanceheads, and savage ornaments. Young braves rode their plunging barbs restlessly to and fro. The shrill and startling notes of preparation reached us but too plainly, and we hurried back to await the expected charge. The train was in almost inextricable confusion, but the Colonel soon restored order. The wagons, mules, and men advanced to the brow of the hill and made a corral: that is, the two front wagons came together, and the inside fore-wheels of those following were made to touch the outside hindwheel of the one immediately in front. In this manner, a secure but irregular oval pen was formed, into which were driven the oxen, the *caballada,* and the riding animals, thus leaving the men free to devote their whole attention to the enemy. There was little noise, but much alacrity, and considerable trepidation among the poor teamsters, thirty of whom were without firearms. We had scarcely finished our preparations for defense, when the Indians, with poised lances, furiously charged upon us. For some time they circled around our corral with guns unslung and white shields continually shifted to protect their bodies. At last they drew rein, and on each side of our party, commenced a lively demonstration, sending their balls singing through the air, some overhead, some perforating the wagons and wagonsheets, and some knocking the fur from our hidebound oxen.

We were drawn up in line outside fronting the main body two hundred and fifty yards distant. We gave them several rounds, one-half of us reserving fire until the discharged arms were reloaded. The Indians scattered after our rather ineffectual volleys, and their position became more menacing, their war-whoops more dissonant and savage than before. We posted ourselves about the wagons, each man to his

liking. Lieutenant Brown, with five men, took a position on a knoll fifty yards from us and kept up an incessant firing, which was warmly reciprocated by the foe. It became exciting; the warriors galloping furiously, bent down, now on this side, now on that, until nothing of their person could be seen but the heel and part of the leg thrown across the cantle of the saddle. From under the horse's neck would issue a smokecloud, and we heard the sighing of the ball as it cut its way overhead, or knocked the dust from the dry plain. Sharply-sighted rifles gave ready answer; cheers rang out from our exhilarated party, and unfortunate oxen stung by furrowing bullets from lumbering *escopetas,* plunged and horned each other from side to side of the crowded corral.

A California Indian, belonging to Colonel Russell, ran with gun in hand, far out toward the foiled enemy, making the Indian sign of insult and derision; and, in Spanish, abusing them most scandalously. He came back before long in no small hurry, with three of the outraged foe at his heels, who were in turn repelled at fullest speed by us. A ball overhead causes even the coolest man to dodge involuntarily, however surely he may know that the whistling bullet has already missed him. This is especially the case in a desultory scattered fire. Many a hearty laugh was had at the ludicrous positions into which we found ourselves thrown by these badly-aimed missiles.

The Indians detained us an hour, and then, relinquishing their *coup* attempts, moved off toward the west, to our extreme gratification. Had the charges been made before the corral was formed, they would have scalped the whole party, for our force was small and composed for the most part of green

teamsters. Yoking up, we reached camp by the river's side, hot, thirsty, and irritated at our meager satisfaction.

June 20th. The train proceeded with much caution. Indian spies watched us in the distance, hanging like wolves on our rear; the gleam of their lances was often seen along the sand buttes beyond the river. They were evidently intending to make another descent on the first fair opportunity. Our flankguards were on the alert, and the day ended without a conflict. The country was sparsely wooded with cottonwood and boxelder, and *bois de vache* superseded substantial fuel for several days' travel through the region of the Coon Creeks.

Our animals were saddled, hitched, and the train in motion after an early cup of coffee. The air brisk and cool, and the sky clear, gave promise of a fair day's travel; and even uneasy fears of Comanche attack were not sufficient to check our joyous feelings. It was the duty of the horsemen to push forward at meal time, select a camp, and wait for the arrival of the train. Near noon, we entered a large "bottom," horseshoe-shaped, around which the river made a circuit of three miles or more. The wagons kept the trace across the neck, and a party, composed of Colonel Russell, Mr. Coolidge, and myself on mules, and three others on horses, followed the course of the stream to gather fuel. This I laid across the pommel of the Colonel's saddle as I collected it, and he was already loaded with sufficient to boil our cup of coffee and fry the slice of pork for which we were well prepared by several hours' fasting, when all at once the three horsemen strung out in a straight shoot for the wagons without a word to us. "Hallo!" shouted we. "What's your hurry?" The fast receding men said nothing,

but pointed to the southwest, in which direction there approached at full speed a war party of about forty, endeavoring to cut us off from the wagons which were then coralling in great confusion. Dusky figures and light puffs of smoke showed faintly in the distance the attack on the straggling train. No time was to be lost in rejoining our company, and back we spurred, to the tune of "Comanche take the hindmost." The lines of the Indian attack and our return were convergent, and it was a mere question of speed whether we lost our topknots or gained the corral. The pursuers already had the advantage. The Colonel threw down his wood, and I replaced the old cap on my rifle with a fresh one, determined that one should "go under" before "hair was lifted." I led the retreat, mounted on a small iron-gray mule —a native of the California savannas—who bounded most gallantly for a mile over the prairie. Colonel Russell followed in my wake, but Coolidge was still behind. Our pace seemed snail-like, and we jammed our rifle butts into the flanks of the poor beasts most unmercifully.

"Come on, Coolidge," shouted the Colonel to the frightened trader. "Come on, we'll soon be safe."

"Yes, yes! but this fool animal isn't worth a cuss for running," and with that, he gave the poor mule another "chug" with his sharp riflestock. No exertion was spared, no incentive was neglected, to urge our dull beasts along, and though there was but small chance for escaping a lance thrust, we answered loudly their yells. When within three hundred yards of the wagons, I looked back and saw Coolidge far behind with several Indians close upon him, the foremost brandishing his lance. I shouted to the Colonel that Coolidge was gone, and immediately we jerked our animals around. The Colonel

aimed hastily, fired, and galloped back to the corral. I spurred on to cover the retreat of Coolidge, who came lumbering, with the *owgh-owgh-he-a* of his pursuers close to his ear. When I drew rein and placed it between my teeth, my mule, contrary to all precedent and custom, stood stock still while I took steady aim at the nearest savage, who, flying along with eager look and harsh yell, was striving to make a sure blow. His band followed on his track at distances various as their horses' speed. Coolidge, with eyes staring with fright, bent close down to his mule's neck. When I first drew bead on the Comanche's painted hide, he was approaching in a quartering direction to my right; as the gentleman was rather fleshy about the umbilical region and tender withal, in order to make a sure shot, I kept the silver bead at my riflepoint at that particular spot until he had passed to the left. With the report, the yellow devil's leg twitched in pain (I was so close to him, that I could see even his features with disagreeable distinctness), and throwing up his horse's head, he galloped off to the river. Those who watched say that he did not come back.

Reloading at full speed, Coolidge and I hurried into the corral, which was just being closed. We dismounted, merely giving each other a look of congratulation; for the rattling of the guns and the warwhoops and yells of the men drowned our voices and left us nothing to do but fight. For that work, with a good will, and quite systematically, we prepared ourselves. The Colonel's party was firing with much earnestness. A short distance from the place we were gathering wood, a large force was descending the sand buttes, glittering with bright gunbarrels, swords, and lances—a well-armed band. They crossed the river in a trot, which was quickened into

a charge as they reached the bank, and at one hundred and fifty yards distance, they opened their fire. For a few minutes, rifles, warhoops, *escapetas*, hurrahs contended in discordant strife—a tumult of wild sounds. But they could not stand our well-directed fire and fell back. They left no dead on the field. This is never done, and the only token of the effect of our balls was by the wounded precipitately leaving the immediate scene of action. To give straight-out evidence of injury, by show of pain, or otherwise, is a breach of their code of honor—an infringement severely rebuked by the taunts of the tribe—a weakness not soon forgotten or forgiven by the old chiefs, whose duty and care it is to sustain by precept and example, the national bravery and hardihood. They consider not merely the death of an enemy, a victory—a *coup*[1] must be counted. The warrior who counts a *coup* is allowed the distinction of wearing a black hand painted on the flesh side of his robe. On a horse-stealing expedition, this is a horse; in battle, a scalp; and the trophies must be shown at home before the warrior is allowed to decorate his robe with the black hand. When an Indian falls, too far gone to rescue himself, his friends rush up and bear him off between their fleet steeds.

They rallied and again circled around us with their white shields protecting their bodies, tossing their spears and showing off their beautiful horses, and their own graceful persons, to the best advantage. Their intention was to make a charge on the first vulnerable point, but finding us too well guard-

---

[1]*Coup*—an honor awarded to one who struck the enemy (living or dead) in battle. A scalp was a trophy merely, not a *coup*. Four men might count *coup* on one enemy, but of course there was only one scalp.

ed, they fell back after many feints. I sat flat on the ground, my rifle resting on the spoke of a wagon-wheel—firing as often as an Indian came within range, and, when the painted, war-whooping target *vamosed* for safer quarters, at the crack of the gun, certainly no other than a smile of satisfaction lit up my face. If none fell outright, it was not that any qualms of conscience prevented my taking cool and sure aim at those who, after chasing us a mile and nearly scaring the life out of us, were then keeping us penned in the hot sun without water.

One Indian, who, from his distinguished though scanty dress, was a brave of the first order, came close into our lines, throwing himself behind the body of his horse so as to show nothing but a hand and foot, but as he raised himself, one of the Colonel's men cut with his rifleball a neatly-dressed skin that hung at his neck, which we picked up after the fight as our only trophy. They now tossed their balls into us from a long distance by elevating their pieces, being convinced that our corral could not be broken without great loss of life. Two teamsters, about this time getting scared at the whistling missiles, crept for security into an empty wagon. They had scarcely made themselves comfortable when a ball, crashing through both sides of their defense, buried itself in the side of a poor steer. The terrified Neds tumbled out, greeted by the roars of the men around.

"That's what you get for your cussed cowardice," drawled out one of the fellows.

"Well, I'll be darned, if that wasn't a grazer," ejaculated Charley McCarty. "Feel if you haven't got a hole in your dogskin—I'd hate to be as bad scared as you, by thunder!"

We were detained upward of two hours. Our fatigued and heated oxen were nearly dropping with

thirst. The savages filed slowly up the sand buttes on the other side of the river, and we proceeded to camp, each man talking of his own shots.

June 22. We expected to reach the Pawnee Fork during the morning's march, and as there were bluffs near the camp and several streams intervening, thick set with timber favorable for ambuscade, the advance guard preceded the train a quarter of a mile. We were on the alert, our eyes searching every object, our guns ready to fire, as with bridle rein firmly grasped, we galloped along in the bright summer morning. Our exposed position and the continual expectation of the Comanche yell kept us excited wildly enough, although no foe delayed our march. By noontide, the saddles were off—the wagons corralled, and the tent pitched once more. Among the remains of the old campus, I found the skull and skeleton of an Indian. The sinews, well gnawed by the wolves, were not yet dry, and the skin and hair still graced the head, which, passed from hand to hand by the curious, was at last tossed into the turbulent waters of the flooded Pawnee Fork. The Comanche whose head this was, had been killed a few days previously in an encounter with traders. One or two others "went under" at the same time, but their bodies had been rescued.

On the opposite side of the creek, a train from the States was like ourselves stopped by the risen waters. I accompanied some of our men over to it. We swam across, holding our shirts and buckskins in one hand. At the camp we found a government train, some traders' wagons, any quantity of gaping men, and a white woman—a real white woman! And we gazed upon her with great satisfaction and curiosity. After gleaning the news, we returned in a

full run to the creek, and, crossing as before, retailed our scanty information.

The next day was beautiful, and we waited impatiently for the slowly-receding stream to become fordable. The men scattered on both banks; the grazing cattle and *caballadas*, with the white wagon-tops of the three camps, made a serene and lovely scene. About ten o'clock, an immense drove of buffalo was seen running in the prairie to the southwest. Some of our party set off in pursuit on their horses, while twenty or thirty of us ran down to intercept them as they crossed the creek. A faint cry of "Indians! Indians! Indians!" from the camp reached those nearest the muleguard, and by them it was repeated and wafted on to us, who, hardly knowing whether to *cache* in the undergrowth or to run for camp, stood for a moment undecided and then streaked it for the wagons. Turning our eyes to the furthest train on the hill, we perceived it in great commotion. Fifty Indians were charging among them with their lances, recoiling from the light volumes of smoke at times and again swallowing up the little force with their numbers and shutting them in from our sight. Others were stampeding the oxen. After a conflict of several minutes they retreated, bearing with them a dead warrior behind the bluff hill which jutted boldly from the opposite shore.

Our teamsters, during the fight, looked on with mouth and eyes open in wonderment, regardless of their own cattle still feeding in a deeply-fringed savanna. Tall cottonwood timber overgrown with the luxuriant vine and thick-set underbrush, impervious to the eye, confined our stock to this secluded spot. The creek, half encircling it with a grand sweep, added its protection. A lightguard of three men watched the grazing herd. We were still congrat-

ulating ourselves on our escape, when from the guard we heard the cry that the Indians were swimming the creek and driving off the oxen. More than half the camp started in full run to protect them. As we rounded the angle of the stream, yells were heard, then the dusky forms of a few Indians were seen, and by the time we were within long gunshot, some sixty were among the luckless herd, goading them into a lumbering gallop. The Colonel's party led the van and would have saved the cattle had the teamsters supported them. But, they hanging back, we told them their oxen might go. Hurrying back to camp, Colonel Russell mounted his force and went in pursuit; but in vain we tried to repair the loss that negligence and cowardice had effected. Our ride only rescued thirty oxen and gave us a view of the retreating savages, thrusting their lances into the remainder. In that unfortunate half hour the train lost one hundred and sixty steers; which, at the purchase price—one half less than they were worth on the prairie—was a damage of four thousand dollars, together with a total loss of from five to seven thousand more, in the necessary abandonment of the wagons—the natural result of sending on the plains a set of green men commanded by as raw a director, poorly and scantily armed with government blunderbusses, and meagerly furnished with from eight to fifteen rounds of cartridges each, which were often wasted on game or targets long before reaching the Indian country. And this was not the only instance of miserable economy, as the official reports show.

Our train was in a sad condition—half a yoke to each wagon. Mr. Coolidge was really to be pitied —nearly four hundred miles from the States, with but two oxen to haul four large wagons heavily load-

ed with robes and peltries. The colonel carried a few packs (as many as he was able); he bargained with one of the outward-bound trains to take some back to Mann's Fort, and the rest he *cached*. The government people crowded their "kits" and provision in three wagons; and toward evening of the next day, we crossed the creek which had now subsided, leaving twenty-six wagons and any amount of extras to the Indians and the wolves. Toward sundown, as we were hitching up to travel in the night, a party of dragoons filing down the hill, made camp near. Lieutenant J. Love, commanding, was informed of the outrage and promised satisfaction. We stopped a moment at the train, with which the first fight had occurred. One poor fellow, named Smith, from Van Buren County, Missouri, had been lanced seven times through the neck and breast. He killed the Indian that felled him while on his back and already wounded.

CHAPTER XXVI

FAREWELL!

As we approached the States, running water and heavy timber became more frequent. The advance guard had a grand time the first night after abandoning the wagons, keeping far ahead of the now-slim train which the dim starlight, cut off by fleeting clouds, failed to keep in view. On approaching wooded streams, plainly marked by their blackness, our pace quickened into a gallop, and through it we spurred at a break-neck pace, uncertain whether a deadly blaze from northwest fusils or big-mouthed *escopetas* would welcome us. This we did that our speed might render an enemy's aim uncertain. It is a well-recognized rule of prairie warfare when darkness or thick cover gives concealment to the foe. We awaited the arrival of the train on the further bank; then traveling on, we encamped about midnight near Pawnee Rock. The dew fell heavily and by the time the mules were picketed, we, worn out with watching and riding, wet, cold, and hungry, retired to our blankets. In the morning, early, preparation was made by the mounted men for leaving the slow train; and by seven o'clock, twenty-five of us, with one light wagon and a train of four mules, took our departure. We went to Walnut Creek to dinner (twenty-six miles). Taking the heavy Spanish bits from the mule's mouths to let them drink, we pitched our tent on the north bank. Here were the graves of Tharpe and McGuire, both killed by the Comanches.

Tharpe I have mentioned as being in the train with which John Smith left Mann's Fort. They proceeded thus far without molestation, and encamped

as usual. Tharpe had left the wagons but two hundred yards, approaching a band of buffalo grazing near, when four parties of Indians, from as many points, charged in and threw all into confusion. Five of them fell; and Tharpe, after keeping his pursuers for a long time at bay, was killed and scalped. Repulsed, the Indians retreated, carrying with them sixty head of mules and horses and forty yoke of oxen. Smith, to whom I had intrusted my two mules, Bonita and Diabolique, lost both of them and his seven.

Our exhausted party sank into a sleep, from which the Colonel's cook aroused us to our meal. A short nap after eating, refreshed us still more, and we proceeded. Toward sundown we saw our last buffalo rolling his unwieldy bulk out of rifleshot. We stopped in the twilight on the banks of the Arkansas, and as a final farewell, I bathed my weary limbs in its tepid waters. After a laborious march through loose sandbuttes, we wrapped in our blankets at ten o'clock without keeping guard. During the next day we felt comparatively safe, though still maintaining caution. The country was flooded, and the water stood in pools over the soaked prairie, and on a heavy, rainy morning, we breakfasted on Cottonwood Fork, eating our soggy food from a reeking saddle-cover for a table-cloth.

On the first day of July, we met an encampment a few miles from Council Grove and rode to it.

"Only a green teamster train," said one of the Californians returning, "a green lot for sure, but they've got arwerdenty, and that's a fact. Hurrah for whisky on a rainy day, anyhow!"

With the aid of a few bottles of the liquor, our crowd soon became uproarious. With lassoes whirling, they spurred their jaded mules and in drunken

merriment roped and hauled each other from the saddle. Wiping-sticks, hats, and even rifles, fell unheeded to the ground, to be gathered by the two sober ones of the party, and the mad ride was ended by the whole party raising the war-whoop and charging on a lot of greenhorns at Council Grove. The colonel made camp a quarter of a mile from the grove and ordered his men to it, but they, ridiculously elated with their first spree, set all commands at defiance. The outward-bound train looked in astonishment at these leather-clad, weather-beaten Bacchanalians and stood clear of their riflestocks and lariats.

The next morning, Colonel Russell, Charley McCarty, Henry Murphy, the colonel's Indian, and I left in advance of the train, with two packmules, for the "States," hoping to reach the nearest frontier town about two hundred miles distant, in three days. We jogged over the trail, moistened just enough by the late rains to be good traveling. We were grateful for the sweet prairie-flowers, and the greensward, for we were again in the long-grass country. Lively brooks, with crystal waters, danced past over pebbly beds. The whirring grouse and antlered deer attracted our attention as we crossed the open plain or entered the exalted forest.

But it was in the economy of nature to provide a set-off to the joyous contentment of our party. Myriads of biting flies attacked our poor beasts with such fury that speedy progress was impeded. Gouts of blood spotted their hides, and their efforts, although assisted by us with half-covered boughs, gave no relief. In a gnat-infested, fly-ridden, miserably hot, and uncomfortable hollow, we made noon-camp. That night we slept securely, without a guard.

Late at the close of another hot day, a neat log-house stood in our path. It belonged to the nephew of the renowned Indian chief, Logan.[1] We again sat at a table and enjoyed the kind hospitalities of this family, but preferred our blankets in the open air to the proffered bed. In the morning, bidding farewell to our kind entertainers, who would accept no remuneration, we rode through fields of waving corn and pastures whose fences and careful culture denoted the white man's civilizing hand. This was the domain of the Shawnees and Delawares, who farm extensively and are prosperous.

The shady banks of Blue River made our ride a short one, and at sunset, we rode into the town of Westport, where, giving our mules to the hostler and pledging each other in *aguardiente*, with the mountain toast of "luck," we sat down to supper in the United States, after an absence of many months. Our hands unconsciously found their way to the scalpknife at the waistband, and we laughed more than once at ourselves for using the left-hand fingers in lieu of the awkward two-tined fork. A nephew of the pioneer, Boone, with the old man's love for a frontier life, has here a store, at which I put myself into civilized garments. The old blue blanket, which had been my house and my pillow for a twelvemonth, I gave to a grinning negro boy; the sorrow in parting with it being lessened by the idea that with him, it would still be nearer the much-loved prairie.

Colonel Russell and his party went to Independence by land, and I rode four miles to Kansas on the coupling pole of our ox wagon, where I embarked on a steamer for Fort Leavenworth to get my pay for services rendered. I dined with Lieutenant Prince,

[1] *Logan*—famous orator, chief of the Iroquois (1725-1780).

to whom I had a letter. Captain Enos was absent, but I met him the next morning, gave him the state of affairs in the Territory and at Mann's Fort, and he handed me my hard-earned dollars.

Our company was now broken up. Some went to St. Louis by land. I reached there by water, and from that point a speedy steamboat trip restored me to home and friends.

APPENDIX

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

I. Literary Value of the Book

The general literary merits of Garrard's book are obvious enough, and have been mentioned in the Foreword and the Editor's Introduction in this edition. It may be as well to add that here we have examples of almost every sort of narrative and description, from quick, disconnected jottings from the author's notebooks to the most finished and rounded periods of which the young man was capable. Students should be asked to select those passages of description or narrative which strike them as being most excellent, and afterward the teacher should require the student to give reasons for his choice. Again, students may be asked to criticize the more informal passages, and then asked to rewrite these, trying to improve upon them. Such an exercise will usually vindicate the author, whose speed, condensation, and verve can hardly be matched among writers of his age not professional authors.

Garrard's high-spirited style was most unusual in his own day, and strikingly suggests the best writers of our own time in America. He wrote freshly, as they do, and took a poet's liberties with language; yet he rarely fails to make his meaning clear and vivid. In a certain sense, we may say that Garrard, at his best, is in the most vital tradition of the best American literature.

It is true that, in his later years, he fell back into the stilted absurdities of his generation, whose culture was completely dominated by British standards, and his later work is of no literary, and very little historical, interest. But in *Wah-to-Yah and the Taos Trail*, he did some very excellent work.

Not the least of the author's merits is his complete democracy, and generous sympathy with all kinds and conditions of men, and in this respect, also, he rises above most of the writers of memoirs in his day.

II. Supplementary Readings

Garrard saw so much during his brief year in the Old Southwest, and has crammed so much into his little book, that a reading from a number of volumes on the same subjects is highly desirable, if one is to appreciate his nar-

rative to the full. Accordingly, the editor here offers the following list of supplementary publications, in the hope that they will assist the student (or teacher) in gaining a more complete knowledge of the background of Garrard's story.

To the list has been added an outline of the book—by subjects treated—together with references to the authorities cited. This will make it an easy matter for the student to inform himself on any and every phase of the experience of our author in the least possible time, and with the least possible trouble. These references may be read to the class by the teacher, or used as specific assignments for papers or readings by the students. The list makes no claim to completeness. But all the books listed are readable, authoritative. and readily available. All good school libraries in the Southwest should contain them.

LIST OF REFERENCES

(1) *American Indians, Handbook of*, Bulletin 30, Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, D. C. 2 vols. (An encyclopedia of Indians and all matters pertaining to Indians north of Mexico.)

(2) Chittenden, H. M., *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*, 3 vols. Francis P. Harper. New York, 1902. (An authoritative book on this subject.)

(3) Clark, W. P., *The Indian Sign Language*. Philadelphia, 1885. (Where this book is not available, the student had better consult Ernest Seton Thompson's book on the same subject, which has the advantage of many illustrations.)

(4) Cooke, P. St. George, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California*, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1878. (The memoir of an officer, U. S. A.)

(5) Dorsey, George A. *The Cheyenne Sun Dance*. Anthropological Publications of the Field Museum, Chicago, Ills. 1905 (A lavishly illustrated volume on this interesting annual ceremony of the Cheyennes.)

(6) Gregg, Josiah, *Commerce of the Prairie; or, The Journal of a Santa Fe Trader*, during eight expeditions across the Great Western Prairies, and a residence of nearly nine years in Northern Mexico. Reprinted in Thwaite's series of Early Western Travels, The Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1905. Vols. I and II. (A complete account of the early trade over the Santa Fe Trail.)

(7) Grinnell, George Bird. *Bent's Old Fort and its Builders.* Published in Collections of the Kansas State Historical Society, 1919-1922, Vol. XV, page 28. State Printer, Topeka, Kansas. (This is a wonderfully interesting and complete story of Bent's Old Fort and of the many historic personalities connected with it.)

(8) Grinnell, George Bird. *Beyond the Old Frontier.* Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1913. (An account of the adventures of a number of hunters, Indian-fighters and fur traders, with copious quotations from rare old books about the West. One chapter partly duplicates No. 7 above. Another chapter deals with Garrard's own story.)

(9) Grinnell, George Bird. *The Fighting Cheyennes.* New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915. (Wars of the Cheyennes, as told by the Indians themselves. A very interesting and valuable book.)

(10) Grinnell, George Bird. *The Cheyenne Indians, Their History and Ways of Life.* 2 vols. Illustrated. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1923. (A complete account of the Cheyennes, their manners and customs.)

(11) Grinnell, George Bird. *Coup and Scalp Among the Plains Indians.* The American Anthropologist, Vol. XII, No. 2, page 296, 1910. (A paper in this periodical, giving the facts about the much misrepresented war customs of the Plains Indians in regard to scalps and *coup.*)

(12) Haines, Helen. *History of New Mexico.* New York. New Mexico Historical Publishing Company. 1891.

(13) Hughes, John T. *Doniphan's Expedition and the Conquest of New Mexico.* Cincinnati, 1847. Reprinted, with additions, by W. E. Connelley, Kansas City, Mo. 1907. (Full account of the part played by General Doniphan's men in the War with Mexico.)

(14) Inman, Colonel Henry. *The Santa Fe Trail.*

(15) Marcy, Captain Randolph B. *The Prairie Traveller, a Handbook for Overland Expeditions.* New York Harper & Bros. 1859. (Good general account of the conditions of travel on the plains.)

(16) Mooney, James. *Calendar History of the Kiowa Indians.* Seventeenth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Washington, D. C. 1895-96. (A good chronicle of Plains Indian history, manners, etc.)

(17) Prince, L. Bradford. *Historical Sketches of New Mexico.* Kansas City, 1883. (An account of the earlier history of the region.)

(18) Ruxton, George Frederick. *In the Old West.* New

York. The Macmillan Company, 1924. (A lively, very interesting story of trappers, hunters, traders, and Indians on the Arkansas, in Taos, and in California. A reprint of Ruxton's "Life in the Far West" (Blackwood's Magazine, 1918.) Written by a gentleman of culture and wide experience.

(19) Sabin, Edwin L. *Kit Carson Days* (1809-1868), illustrated. Chicago, A. C. McClurg & Co., 1919. (A most complete account of the life and times of Kit Carson. An excellent work of reference, well indexed.)

(20) Twitchell, Ralph Emerson. *The Military Occupation of New Mexico.* (The best brief account of the matter.) Denver, Colo. 1909.

(21) Vestal, Stanley, (Walter S. Campbell), *Fandango, Ballads of the Old West,* Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1927. True and vivid stories of Kit Carson and his contemporaries in ballad verse.

(22) Vestal, Stanley—*Adventures of Kit Carson,* Haldenan-Julius Co., Girard, Kans., 1927.

REFERENCES TO BE READ, LISTED BY SUBJECT AND CHAPTER

I. THE SANTA FE TRAIL—Garrard, Chapter I.

(a) Ruxton, *In the Old West,* Chapter III. (St. Louis, and the start West).

(b) Grinnell, *Beyond the Old Frontier,* pages 172-176 (How the wagon trains of Bent's Old Fort were managed).

(c) Grinnell, *Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders,* pages 52-55. (The same: how the wagon trains of Fort Bent were managed).

(d) Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies,* Vol. I, chapters II, III, pages 187-218. (Account of the start, organization, and progress of a wagon train to the Cimarron Crossing).

II. OLD FORT BENT (BENT'S OLD FORT) or FORT WILLIAM. Garrard, Chapter II.

(a) Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West,* Vol. I, Part I, Chapter VI, pages 44-50. (An account of the structure and arrangements and organization of the typical trading post.)

(b) Grinnell, *Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders,* (illustrated) pages 28-92. (Complete account of the firm, the fort, and its personnel, with portraits.)

(c) Grinnell, *Beyond the Old Frontier,* "When Beaver Skins Were Money"—pages 125-191. (Partly the same as (b) above, but with a Plan of Bent's Old Fort. (page 134).

(d) Sabin, *Kit Carson Days*, Chapter XVIII—"Bent's Fort of the Plains"—pages 186-195, with old print of the Fort, and portrait of William Bent. (Note: the print reverses the fort; to see it as it was, look at the print in the mirror.)

(e) Ruxton, *In the Old West*. Pages 279-283. Brief but graphic description of Bent's Old Fort.

(f) Vestal, *Fandango*—p. 53 *Kit Carson's Last Smoke*.

III. THE INDIANS. *Garrard, Chapters* III, IV, V, VI.

(a) *American Indians, Handbook of*. Bulletin 30, B. A. E. (This is an excellent two-volume encyclopedia of all matters relating to Indians north of Mexico. It may be used as a work of reference on all such matters in general).

(b) Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*. (The following topics may be used:

Warfare—Vol. II, pages 1-87.
Religion—Vol. II, pages 87-211.
Medicine Lodge (Sun Dance)—pages 211-285, Vol. II.
Songs—Vol. II, pages 392-394.
Village Life—pages 47-102, Vol. I.
Women and Children—pages 102-247, Vol. I.
Hunting—pages 247-312, Vol. I.
Games and Amusements—pages 312-336, Vol. I.

(c) Grinnell, *Coup and Scalp among the Plains Indians*. (Read in connection with Garrard's account of the Scalp Dance.)

(d) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes*—Chapters I to VIII cover the warfare and history of the tribe up to the time Garrard met them.

(e) Chittenden, *History of the American Fur Trade*, Vol. II, Part V, Chapters VII and IX, pages 841-875. (A general account of the Indians on the Plains).

(f) Marcy, *The Prairie Traveller*. Chapter VI, pages 183-230. (Indians from the point of view of the white man on the trail).

(g) Clark, *Indian Sign Language*. Pages 1-20; and look up such signs as Garrard must have used in the conversations with Indians he records. (The illustrated book by Seton Thompson will be useful here).

(h) Dorsey, *Cheyenne Sun Dance*. Pages 1-66, and illustrations throughout the book. (The Medicine Lodge.)

(i) Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*. Vol. II, Chapters XII, XIII, XIV, XV. Pages 1-87. (Account of the Indians as the trader saw them.)

(j) Mooney, *Calendar History of the Kiowas*. Pages 286-7. (Indian depredations of the year 1846-7).

(k) Vestal, *Fandango* —pp. 4-12; 24-36; and 42-53.

IV. TRADE WITH THE INDIANS. Garrard, Chapters III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII.

(a) Chittenden, *History of the American Fur Trade*. Vol. I, Part I, pages 1-70. (Character and practices of the business.)

(b) Ruxton, *In the Old West*. Pages 128-129. (Trading Practices.)

(c) Sabin, *Kit Carson Days*. Chapter XI, pages 91-110.

(d) Grinnell, *Beyond the Old Frontier*. Pages 180-184. (Account of the Indian trade of Bent's Old Fort.)

(e) Vestal, *Adventures of Kit Carson*.

V. NEW MEXICAN AFFAIRS. Garrard, Chapters IX to XVIII, inclusive.

(a) Sabin, *Kit Carson Days*. Chapter XXVII, pages 301-309. (An account of the revolt and massacre at Taos by an eyewitness.)

(b) Twitchell, *Military Occupation of New Mexico*. Chapter IV, pages 122-200. (More complete and detailed account of the fighting at Taos.)

(c) Haines, *History of New Mexico*. Chapter XIII, pages 230-241.

(d) Hughes, Cooke, Prince. All these may be used for reading or reference with regard to the general background of New Mexican affairs.

(e) James, George Wharton, *The Land of the Delight-Makers*. (Though not touching on history often, this is a splendidly illustrated book on the region and peoples of New Mexico.)

(f) Chittenden, *History of the American Fur Trade*. Vol. II, Part II, Chapter XXVII, pages 483-488. (On Old Santa Fe.)

(g) Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*. Vol. I. Chapter VI to XI, inclusive. Pages 257-350. (Account of old-time New Mexico.)

(h) Ruxton, *In the Old West*. Chapter VIII, pages 284-302. (Lively account of a *fandango* at Taos.)

(i) Vestal, *Fandango*, pp. 36 to 42—"*Governor Bent*."

VI. TRAPPER LIFE. *Garrard. Chapters* XVIII to XXI, inclusive.

(a) Ruxton, *In the Old West*. Chapters I and II, pages

1-93, and Chapters IV and V, pages 130-210. (All phases of trapper life amusingly and truthfully portrayed.)

VII. HOMEWARD BOUND. Garrard, Chapters XXI to XXV, inclusive.

(a) Mooney, *Calendar History of the Kiowas.* Pages 286-7. (Indian depredations of the year 1846-7.)

(b) Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies.* Chapter XVI, Vol. II. (Note, on page 93, a list of regular camping places on the Santa Fe Trail.)

(c) Grinnell, *Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders.* Pages 89-92, and map of the Colorado portion of the mountain branch of the Santa Fe Trail.

(d) Inman, *The Santa Fe Trail.* Read portions dealing with the places mentioned by Garrard.

(e) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes.* Chapters I-VIII, inclusive. (Account of Indian warfare).

(f) Vestal, *Fandango,* pp. 4 to 17.

GLOSSARY

Acequia (Spanish)—irrigation ditch.
ad interim (Latin)—meanwhile.
adobes (Spanish)—unburnt bricks.
agua ardiente—strong drink—brandy.
alcalde (Spanish)—mayor of a town.
au contraire (French)—on the contrary.
au fait (French)—in fact.
Bacchus (Latin)—god of wine.
Bayou Salade (French)—Salt Marsh, South Park, Colo.
beau ideal (French)—perfection.
Benedict—bridegroom, husband.
biscoche—(compare biscuit) twice-cooked, or well-baked bread.
comme le va (como la va) (Spanish)—how goes it? how are you?
boeuf (French)—ox, bull, beef.
bois de vache (French)—"cow wood"—buffalo chips.
boudins (French)—intestines of the buffalo containing the chyme; cleaned, reversed, cooked, they were very edible.
buffalo chips—dried excrement of the buffalo.
caballada (Spanish)—herd of horses or stock; extra animals.
cache (French)—hide, a hiding-place. The Caches—a well-known camp on the Santa Fe Trail near Dodge City, Kansas.
catlinite—red stone of which Indian pipe-bowls were made, found only in Minnesota, named from painter Catlin.
cavayard (cavvy, cavalyard)—same as caballada.
charbonnier (French)—coal-seller.
chassaed—sashayed (moved towards, in a dance).
cholagogue—a purgative of bile.
cigarillo (Spanish)—cigarette made with corn shucks.
compagnons de voyage (French)—traveling companions.
companero (Spanish)—companion.
conge (French)—leave, dismissal.
Coon Creeks—region north of the Arkansas, west of Pawnee Rock, where there was no timber.
coup (French)—stroke, blow. Among the Indians, the honor due one who struck the enemy, thus "counting coup."
couteau (French)—knife.

crawfished (colloquial Americanism)—went backward.
cuisine (French)—kitchen, cookery, the cooks, fare.
dans la costume a la Adam (French)—in Adam's costume —naked.
dejeuners (French)—breakfasts; meals.
"*doin's*" (trapper slang)—food.
dubber—an adze with an elk-horn handle, for dressing hides, used by the Plains Indians.
dudheen (dudeen)—clay pipe.
Dryads (classical mythology)—wood spirits.
"*Elephant,*" *the*—Elephant Butte, in Arizona.
encore (French)—again, once more.
enfant de garce (*grace*) (French)—Child of Mercy
en passant (French)—in passing.
en route (French)—on the way.
escopeta (Spanish)—shotgun.
fache (French)—angry.
fandango (Spanish)—a gathering, dance, fight, party.
fanega (Spanish)—grain measure (about 1.6 bushels).
"*fleece*" (trapper slang)—the back, side, withers of an animal, and the meat or fat obtained therefrom.
fofurraw (fofarraw)—from French *fanfaron*—(trapper slang)—swaggering, dressed up, civilized, effeminate, or anything having these qualities, such as clothing from the settlements.
Gee—term of command to draft animals—"turn to the right."
Ginevra—name of a girl who locked herself in a chest and was not found for many years after.
"*goat*" (trapper slang)—antelope, the American pronghorn.
guerillas (Spanish)—skirmishers.
Hidalgo (Spanish)—a nobleman.
Incog. (Latin) (incognito)—unknown, in disguise.
in statu quo (Latin)—in the state in which.
Jam satis (Latin)—already enough.
jornada (Spanish)—day's march.
melange (French)—mixture.
modus operandi (Latin)—manner of doing.
morceau (French)—morsel.
muchacha (Spanish)—girl.
mulada (Spanish)—drove of mules.
Neuva Mejico (Mexico) (Spanish)—New Mexico.
"*On the prairie*" (trapper slang)—free, without expectation of repayment.

Palou (see Pelado).
parfleche (French)—rawhide, Indian shield of rawhide, etc.
parokeets—small birds of the parrot family, formerly common in the Southwest, now extinct.
pelado (Spanish)—beggar, loafer, greaser.
phiz (slang)—physiognomy, face, countenance, features.
plaza (Spanish)—public square.
possibles—personal property, which might possibly be anything. Possible-sack, bag for personal property.
Quien sabe? (Spanish)—who knows? I don't know.
qui vive? (French)—who stirs? (a challenge). On the qui vive—on the alert.
Ranchero (Spanish)—rancher, herdsman.
rancho (Spanish)—hut, ranch, small farm.
regiones infiernos, los (Spanish)—the infernal regions.
regnant (Latin)—ruling, in office.
rendezvous (rendevoo)—meeting place; among the trappers, the "fair" in the wilderness where they met to sell their furs. (French).
riata, la (Spanish)—lariat, rope, lasso.
Sacré (French)—cursed, confounded, blasted.
sang-froid (French)—composure.
sans culottes (French)—without breeches, first applied to the mob in Paris during the Revolution.
sans the needful—without money, broke, penniless.
sauvages, les (French)—the savages.
savy (savvy) (Spanish *sabe*)—know, understand, be familiar with.
serape (Spanish)—oblong blanket with a hole in the middle.
sine qua non (Latin)—a necessity.
sign—indications of the passage of men or animals, tracks, warnings, visible indications.
Tierra Caliente (Spanish)—hot country.
tonnerre (French)—thunder.
toling (tole, toll—to draw as with a lure, attract, entice, lure)—luring, enticing.
Valgame Dios (Spanish)—God bless me.
vaya (Spanish)—get along, go.
view halloo—cry given by hunters when the game is in sight, or comes in sight; the halloo on viewing it.
voyageurs (French)—traveller, voyager, hence those who wandered through the woods and prairies, woodsman, canoist, packer, etc.

Wo-ha—cry of command to draft animals, "turn to the left."

Yellowskins—Indians, name applied by whites. This was also the name applied to the whites by the Indians. oddly enough.

The Western Series of English and American Classics

Edited under the general supervision of
S. R. HADSELL, Professor of English, University of Oklahoma, and
GEO. C. WELLS, Chief High School Inspector, State of Oklahoma

---

IRVING. *A Tour on the Prairies.* Edited by Joseph Thoburn and Geo. C. Wells.
PARKMAN. *The Oregon Trail.* Edited by W. S. Campbell.
GARRARD. *Wah-To-Yah and the Taos Trail.* Edited by W. S. Campbell.
STEVENSON. *Treasure Island.* Edited by Geo. C. Wells.
STEVENSON. *The Black Arrow.* Edited by Geo. C. Wells.
SCOTT. *The Lady of the Lake.* Edited by Grace E. Jencke.
SCOTT. *Ivanhoe.* Edited by Bessie M. Huff.
GEORGE ELIOT. *Silas Marner.* Edited by S. R. Hadsell and Geo. C. Wells.
TENNYSON. *Idylls of the King.* Edited by S. R. Hadsell.
DICKENS. *A Tale of Two Cities.* Edited by Geo. C. Wells.
CARLYLE. *Essay on Burns.* Edited by Irene P. McKeehan.
FRANKLIN. *Autobiography.* Edited by Geo. C. Wells.
GOLDSMITH. *She Stoops to Conquer.* Edited by Jesse L Rader.
MILTON. *Minor Poems.* Edited by L. J. Barton.
AMERICAN SHORT STORIES. Edited by Irene P. McKeehan.
SHERIDAN. *The Rivals.* Edited by Jesse L. Rader.
SHAKESPEARE. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.* Edited by S. R. Hadsell.
SHAKESPEARE. *Julius Caesar.* Edited by S. R. Hadsell.
SHAKESPEARE. *The Merchant of Venice.* Edited by S. R. Hadsell.
SHAKESPEARE. *As You Like It.* Edited by C. B. Cooper.
SHAKESPEARE. *Macbeth.* Edited by C. B. Cooper.
SHAKESPEARE. *Hamlet.* Edited by Hardin Craig.

NOTE: These classics can be furnished in either paper or cloth binding.